Kedar Nath & Badri Narayan

(A Pilgrim's Diary.)

SISTER NIVEDITA

Author of The Master as I saw Him, The web of Indian Life, Civic and National Ideals, etc.



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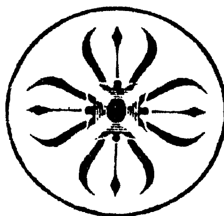
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NOTES.

The previous title of the book, "The Northern Tirtha: A Pilgrims Diary" was of too general an import to indicate to the reading public the particular nature of its contents which is a description of a pilgrimage to the famous shrines of Kedar Nath and Badri Narayan in the North of India ; and therefore it has been changed into the more particular and appropriate name of "Kedar Nath and Badri Narayan: A Pilgrim's Diary." A map of the pilgrim route and two pictures of the famous shrines have been incorporated in the present re-print, which we hope, will be appreciated by the public.

PUBLISHERS.



Temple of Kedarnath

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION xv

CHAPTER I

FROM KOBE TO KOREA

The quest—The great review of the Japanese fleet—The Mikado on board the *Asama*—A solemn salutation—An imperial banquet—Japan as a naval power in the Pacific—We cross to Fusan, the terminus of the Japanese railway in Korea . . . .

CHAPTER II

THE PATH OF EMPIRE THROUGH KOREA

The white-robed people—Pretty priestesses—The Japanese railway—Methods of modern conquest—Under which flag?—An uprising city—Japanese money-lending—A shipwreck and a rescue—Sorrowful Seoul—Korean magicians—The bell with the wail of a child in its voice—A curious rifle-match—The postponed Jubilee—Unending washing-days . 14

CHAPTER III

IN THE LAND OF THE MORNING CALM

Europe made neighbourly—The timber concessions—A possible *casus belli*—Exploring bypaths—Singing girls—The magnificent "yang bans"—Hat-buying—Official extortion—A field for missionaries—Trouble between converts—Extra-territorial rights—The villa-dwellers—If Christ came to Korea? 38

CHAPTER IV

DALNY, THE COMMERCIAL TERMINUS OF THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY

By order of the Czar—Its Scotch-Sabbath appearance—Re-foresting—The electric power house—Speculative house-buying—Official palm-greasing—Dalny's prospects—Its new garrison and fortifications—Possibilities of damnation 50

CONTENTS

CHAPTER V

PORT ARTHUR, THE MILITARY TERMINUS OF THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY

Denied admittance—Russian naval manœuvres—Full speed to the horizon—A town of feverish activity—Wholesale eviction—Wonderful fortifications—Dredging out a naval base—Building the Novi Garod—The conference at Port Arthur—Its results—A Russian Viceroy for the East . . . . PAGE 66

CHAPTER VI

PEKIN REVISITED

The new legation quarter—Monseigneur Favier and the Dowager-Empress—The Pekin races—Attitude of the natives towards foreigners—Sir Robert Hart—Much-drilled soldiers—Cosmopolitan beach-combers and their saloons—Night on the wall—Watchmen and carrion dogs—The voices of the dawn 75

CHAPTER VII

THE JAPANISATION OF CHINA

Lessons of the joint-occupation of Pekin, 1900—The *rapprochement* since between Japan and China—Chinese students coming to Japan—The Japanese university in Pekin—Increase of Japanese trade with China—Military instructors—Re-organising the Pekin police—Japanese diplomatic pressure—Loss of British prestige in the East—When the Dowager-Empress dies 92

CHAPTER VIII

FROM PEKIN TO NEW-CHWANG

Start from Pekin—Fourth-class sardine boxes—A curious goldfield—A battlefield—A thirsty tract—A night near the Great Wall—A gorgeous Toutai and his wives—Delicious prawns—Russians in New-chwang—"Evacuation *pour rire*"—The courtesy of Russian officials—We join the main line 107

CHAPTER IX

THROUGH MANCHURIA

Fortified stations—The railway guards—A luxuriant country—Steeplechasing Cossacks—Mukden—Town-planting—Busy Harbin—Gambling in town sites—Flour mills coining money—No English need apply—Luxurious prairie-land—Nomad cattle droves 120

CHAPTER X

THE IMPORTANCE OF MANCHURIA

The immigrants—Koreans and Japanese—How Russia laid hands on Manchuria—"In war, burn and destroy"—Change of attitude to the natives—How the bear's paw can caress—The ostriches of our Foreign Office—Knocking at the closed door—The coal- and goldfields of Manchuria 132

CHAPTER XI

THE PATH OF EMPIRE THROUGH MONGOLIA

PAGE

The Russo-Chinese Bank—Dexterous diplomacy—A wonderful gold find—A wily old llama—Discarding China's suzerainty—A line laid Pekinwards—The inevitable railway guards—A fortified station stronghold—Thirty miles from Pekin—The hoisting of the flag . . . 144

CHAPTER XII

LAKE BAIKAL

An interesting break—Sleighing across—The home of the war-god—Seals—How the lake was formed—Crossing it in summer—The future route—A Siberian funeral—The ice-breaker—The mirrored mountains—The snow-fringed Angara—The Imperial express—Another resting-place 152

CHAPTER XIII

IRKUTSK

A succession of surprises—Hungry for population—The shops and theatre—Its innumerable institutions—Seventy millions in gold—Illicit gold-buying—How holy Russia prays—Garrotting—A visit to the prison—The future of the city 161

CHAPTER XIV

PEOPLE ONE MEETS ON THE WAY

The natives—Manchus—Yakus—Buriats—Mongols—Shamanism their religion—Military travellers—Globe-trotters—The professor—The terrible experience of a missionary with a Russian sausage . . 172

CHAPTER XV

FROM IRKUTSK TO TOMSK

Leaving Irkutsk—The monastery of the Ascension—Krasnoyarsk, a cross road on the path of Empire—The goldfields of the Upper Yenisei—The coalfields—The steamer traffic—Mammoths—Atchinsk—Boycotted Tomsk—Its university, the munificence of its benefactors, the multitudinous charities, institutions, clubs 181

CHAPTER XVI

THE EXPRESS

Is it comfortable?—The food—Russian appetites—The *chef de train*—Hieroglyphic orderings—Vodka as an *aperatif*—The Wagon-Lits—A rubber of bridge—How to stop a Russian express—Picture post-cardism—The building of the railway—Its cost—Its earning power—Its increasing traffic 193

CHAPTER XVII

THE REFORM OF THE EXILE SYSTEM

The number of exiles—Poles—Nihilists—Democratic condemnation—The power of the mir—Educated exiles and their work—Explorations of Tschkanobsky—Colonisation by criminals a failure—Reforms—The Imperial edict of 1900—Its significance—Effect on Siberia of the abolition of capital punishment—Glimpse of a prison-train . . . PAGE 208

CHAPTER XVIII

ACROSS THE OBI BASIN

Krasnoyarsk and its possibilities—The river-paths of Siberia—Urmans and the tundra belt—Where the world is cold—Explorers—An Arctic wedding-tour—A tragedy—The Baraba Steppe—The world's greatest coalfields—Twenty-six million pounds in sight—Cossacks of the steppes—Cold storage and exports—A Nile valley of the North . 217

CHAPTER XIX

THE GREAT TREK EASTWARD

The procession of emigrant trains—Their occupants—The progress of the growing migratory movement—The fertility of the land awaiting occupation—Some talks with the emigrants—The rapid increase of the population of Siberia—The making of markets for the manufacture of goods—What it may amount to by the end of the century—Siberian sunrise . 230

CHAPTER XX

UNTO MOSCOW, THE HEART OF RUSSIA

Industrial Moscow—Its millionaires—Fifty per cent. dividends—Cotton-spinning—Palatial shops—Russian illiteracy—God and the Czar—A sacred ambition—Where Napoleon slept—Restaurants—The boulevards—Local colour 240

CHAPTER XXI

WHERE LEADS THE RUSSIAN PATH OF EMPIRE?

The great westward movements—The Huns and Mongols—The eastward movement—The India scare—The strenuous diplomacy of Mr Hay—Limits to the Russian advance 250

APPENDIX 257

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE
George Lynch . . . . *Frontispiece*
The *Asama* saluting the Emperor 4
The *Asama* with the Mikado on board reviewing the Japanese Fleet . . 5
British Tars cheering the Emperor of Japan 7
The Osaka Exhibition 9
The Art Section, Osaka Exhibition 9
Pretty Japanese Priestesses assisted at the Buddhist Festival . . . 15
The main Street in Fusan 16
In a Korean Village 19
Japanese Soldiers in Korea 22
Japanese Field Artillery Drilling 23
Koreans Gambling 24
A Korean Cottage 25
The Wall of Seoul 26
Brass Ware Sellers in Seoul 27
The Electric Trams in Old Seoul 29
The Emperor of Korea 31
The Korean Way of Ironing Clothes 33
The Bell with the Wail of a Child in its Voice 35
A Korean Gesang or Dancing Girl 41
Where the Trans-Siberian Path of Empire joins the Pacific 51
Dalny a-building 55
The Greatest Electric Plant in Asia ready to supply Dalny with all the power it wants 59
The Parade Ground at Dalny 62
Dalny—the Administrative Quarter 63
Port Arthur, looking towards the back of the Forts 66
The Governor of Port Arthur and his Staff 67
New Town, Port Arthur, a-building 70
Specimen of the Architecture 71
The straining squeak of the wheel-barrows is perpetually in one's ears . . 72
A Droski in the Novi Garod, Port Arthur 73
The Lotus Pond in the Forbidden City, Pekin 77
In the Temple of Heaven 79
The Pekin Derby 81
In the Paddock, Pekin Races 82
On the Course, Pekin Races 83
Correct Card of the Races 84
In the Temple of Heaven, Pekin 87
The Imperial Palace, Pekin 89
The Emperor's Bed 90
In the Forbidden City 95

PAGE
Chinese Police in Pekin 103
Fourth-Class Passengers in China 107
A curious Goldfield 108
The Battlefield of Yangtsun 109
The Great Wall 110
The Great Wall of China at Shan-hai-Kwan 111
Chinese selling Crabs and Prawns 112
Mandarins giving the Toutai a "Send Off" 112
The Toutai's Wives 113
Bridge on the way to New-Chwang 113
No sign of Evacuation about this 114
The Toutai's Launch 115
The Bund at New-Chwang 116
A Street in New-Chwang 117
Russian Cavalry at New-Chwang 118
At a Country Station 120
Building is seen in progress at every Station 121
Cossacks Drilling 122
The Police object to my photographing at the Stations 123
Cossack Cavalry in Manchuria 124
Natives of Mukden 125
The Station at Harbin 127
The Bund at Harbin 128
A Street in Harbin 129
Town-building in Manchuria 133
General Linevich and Staff 134
Russians Encamped 137
A Buriat and a Station-master 146
Kalgan Railway 150
The Train running on board the Steamer at Lake Baikal 155
In the wake of the Ice-breaker 158
Cathedral of the Epiphany 162
Irkutsk 163
Towards the Church 167
A Funeral in Irkutsk 170
Buriats 173
Yakuts 174
A Russian Priest and his Children 176
At Taiga Station 189
Eastern Express Dining-Car 195
A Group of Exiles 210
Emigrants 231
An excellent Crate for an Infant Emigrant 232
A sturdy young Emigrant 234
The Kremlin 241
The Church in the Kremlin 246
Bell of Moscow 247
Street in Moscow 248
Cossacks 254

INTRODUCTION

The path of Empire is along the railway track. So it is to-day, and will be the more so for the morrow of our times. The traveller in the East, in Korea, China, Manchuria, Mongolia and Siberia, sees the new railways either just completed or in course of construction, and wherever they are laid he sees evidences of a new style of invasion—a peaceful invasion, without bloodshed, where the struggle for the possession of the country and its commerce and resources is carried on, not by soldiers, but by an army of diplomatists, merchants, bankers, syndicates, commercial travellers and engineers. In substitution for the crude and costly campaigns of yesterday, more civilised methods of conquest are now being used.

Never has the East been so full of weighty happenings as at present. Empire-building and the struggle for Empire—migratory movements, such as that great trek from Russia eastwards, which this year has assumed such gigantic proportions—the practical transfer of three hundred thousand square miles of the rich territory of Manchuria to Russia—the hoisting of the Russian flag in the capital of Mongolia—the quiet invasion of Korea by the Japanese, which is but a small part of the field of their enterprise—all these movements are afoot. "Hear ye not the hum of mighty workings?" one is inclined to ask on returning to London, but the public ear is so filled with the noise and strife of party politics, that the hum is drowned in a tumult of what appears but of parochial smallness in comparison.

There is a subtle, marvellous attractiveness about the East that must be experienced before it is understood, that

must be lingered over before it is loved. The East calls again unto him who has once heard its voice, with a call deep and rich and sonorous. If one not weary with world wandering, but azest unto the life movement of his time, revisits it, it has much to tell. Englishmen more than others should be interested in its movements and progress, because the want of interest, knowledge and concern about Eastern affairs is mainly accountable for the way that things are let drift and for the way that our trade interests are neglected there, while those of our competitors are being pushed forward with such untiring industry and persistency.

The most interesting path of Empire in the world is the Trans-Siberian Railway, and while travelling on it the great picture of the Russian Empire is gradually unfolded. First, one gets the impression of immense background rolling away in far perspective of sea-like prairie, or vast tracts enshadowed in the gloom of primeval forest, where, as "the pine trees cover the mountains like the shadow of God," so do "the rivers roll on like His eternity" towards their far-off bourne in the Arctic sea. There is a great, solemn majesty in the sweep of these mighty streams, which on their glassy surface bear the impress of masterful power of fate or destiny; and somewhat like the pilgrim-spirit of these waters is the progress of the people—another stream steadily journeying with faces ever turned towards the sunrise. As the background is painted in broad, sweeping strokes, so is the whole picture. There is nothing small or petty; just as the rivers must have immense bridges to span them, so for all else everything is on a great scale. Here the empire builders have to think in thousands. The human figures that fill the foreground of the picture are in harmony with the whole—broad-shouldered deep-chested men, heavy tramping war-soldiers, bearded generals, top-booted and spurred, and strong women, fit for the hard field-work at which we see them labouring, and for the bearing of a race of giants. It seems in the fitness of things that one should

find these Russians to be great eaters and laborious workers, and the principal characteristic that strikes one is a certain primitiveness, simplicity and directness about their lives. God and the Czar are the beings whose perpetual presence is felt throughout the country. The green domes of the numerous churches, the clangour of chiming bells, the deep bass choruses of men's voices echoing round the massive aisles of their cathedrals, like the voice of ocean waves in the cool of a twilight cave, the bowing before shrines and images, and the constant motioning of the sign of the cross, all keep reminding one that this is "Holy Russia." Then over barracks and towers, and high aloft above the monuments that in each town stand to mark the footprints of the present Czar, when as Czarewitch he traversed his dominions, is to be seen the two-headed eagle, the arms of Ivan the Terrible. In every public office, railway station or business cabin, is to be seen the portrait of the Czar, as certainly as the icon with taper ever burning before it. As infants the Russians are taught that they must ever be ready to fight or die for him, and his paternal Government seems to treat them as children all their lives. In this great migratory movement which we see in progress along the line which acts as a safety-valve to the revolutionary unrest in Russia proper, while at the same time it is establishing a Greater Russia in Siberia, it is the Government that leads them out, spoon-feeds them on the way, gives them grants of land and tools to till it with, until they are finally established in their new Eastern homes. The warm glow of very human sunshine that floods the picture is brought out the more by certain lines of deep shadow. Along the same path which travel these emigrants a-picnicing with light hearts towards the new free homes awaiting them, one sometimes passes a train through the iron-barred windows of which wistful faces look out, some of them refined and intellectual, and pitiful faces of women, journeying to exile with those they love, and baby faces that laugh through the

bars, stretching tiny fingers towards their heritage of the flowers outside. But colonisation by criminals has been found a failure. The Imperial edict of June 1900 has changed the exile system, and already there is an immense diminution of the numbers deported.

The peopling of Siberia will be done otherwise. At present there is an annual surplus in the Russian birth-rate of 1,613,000. The population of Russia doubles in sixty years, so that about the middle of this century there will be 135,000,000 more Russians on the earth than at the time of the last census in 1897.

There is much similarity to the Russian plan of peaceful campaign, in the motives which have prompted the Japanese to build the railway from Fusan to Seoul, and much of the same results that it has effected, may be seen being effected there. The railway lines which are opening up China are no less interesting. I would be the last to advocate a policy of territorial aggression in the East—we want to do business there, not to acquire territory, or to have the burden of government upon us. It is in the direction of opening up the country to trade that all our efforts should be concentrated, and the work of our diplomatists ought to be directed more than they are, to furthering our commercial interests. If China were convinced that the Powers wanted no more territory, she would be the more inclined to open her doors for trade. With regard to the three provinces of China, comprising Manchuria, which Russia has now practically annexed, if it is not now too late, the strongest diplomatic pressure, ought to be brought to bear to insist on this immense and rich territory, the importance of whose resources we do not fully realise, being thrown open to the trade of the world. When Russia is being allowed to break her solemn promise to evacuate it, such a condition is the least compensation that might be looked for.

No greater pathway than the Trans-Siberian Railway

has been made on the surface of this planet, or any one of equal importance in its probable effects. We can now travel in the utmost comfort from Piccadilly to Pekin within twenty days, reach Japan in the same time, and Korea, which was called the Hermit Kingdom, has the isolation of its hermitage invaded. It will have far-reaching effects in bringing the East closer to the West, and along its route may be studied how a great Empire is built up by new methods of invasion by railway, and conquests by commerce. Whatever one's nationality, however strong one's prejudices, however out of sympathy one may be with Russia's ambition, she compels the admiration of every impartial mind by her wonderful steadfastness of purpose, her bold and far-sighted enterprise. So much did I see of deep significance, and pregnant with important issues, that I venture to write this book, which, if it does not induce people to make that journey, may at least tell them a few of the many things of interest that are to be seen along this path of Empire.

THE PATH OF EMPIRE

CHAPTER I

FROM KOBE TO KOREA

THE QUEST—THE GREAT REVIEW OF THE JAPANESE FLEET—THE MIKADO ON BOARD THE "ASAMA"—A SOLEMN SALUTATION—AN IMPERIAL BANQUET—JAPAN AS A NAVAL POWER IN THE PACIFIC—WE CROSS TO FUSAN, THE TERMINUS OF THE JAPANESE RAILWAY IN KOREA

IN the East again, out in quest of things interesting, and the only difficulty of the quest arises from their profusion.

While staying in Japan for a couple of months I kept considering where next to turn my steps; there was no war afoot, and the rumours of coming trouble in China, that had been echoing through the press some time before, had died away. The Manchurian question, however, had since loomed up big, and it was evidently worth while to see something of this country, whose ownership was trembling in the balance. Next there was Korea, a nut now ready to be cracked by either Russia or Japan, and serious preparations were in active progress by both countries if not to fight for it, at least to be prepared for desperate eventualities.

That hermit kingdom, the Land of the Morning Calm, as the Koreans themselves call it, always appealed to me, shrouded in the mysterious twilight of its isolation, as attractive for exploration; and I longed to see its white-robed denisons who, in the morning of the world, taught the Japanese to pray, to write, to paint. Best of all there was China to be revisited, the great enigma of the earth,

vast and inscrutible, whose wonderful magnetic fascination ever draws one back.

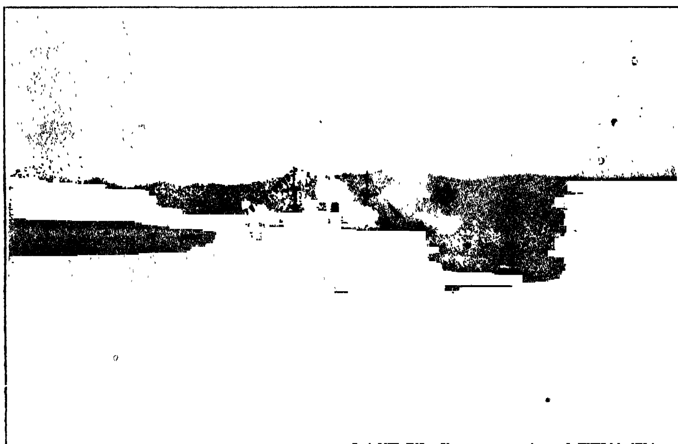
So, finally, I planned a route across the Korean channel—the Asiatic Bosphorus, as some say Japan would like to make it—to Fusan, and on to Chemulpo and Seoul, from there to Chefoo, from whence I could cross to Dalny and see what were the commercial prospects of this new fiat city of the Tsars, and have a look at his great military stronghold and naval base Port Arthur. From there I determined to go by steamer to Taku and *via* Teintsin to Pekin, from Pekin to Piccadilly by rail, with the exception of the Dover and Calais passage. I was fully prepared to deviate, and had plenty of time for stopping *en route* wherever there was attraction to detain, or good material to be found for the use of fountain pen or camera.

Those who, the day before I was leaving Japan on my long journey home, had received invitations to attend the greatest review of the Japanese navy yet held, were, according to the elaborate printed directions, to assemble at 7 A.M. at the Hatoba. It was a fine morning, but a fog covered the whole bay of Kobe. The streets leading to the Bund were profusely decorated with branches of cherry blossoms real and artificial, the latter being indistinguishable from the former, and rows and festoons of flowers and lanterns arranged with such taste that I could not but contrast them favourably with the decorations in London for the King's coronation. They have artistic feeling—these Japanese. Passing a triumphal arch of green I found a crowd of Japanese officers and gentlemen assembled on the pier. The latter all wore frock-coats and tall hats—such hats! hence perhaps the word "Hatoba." This costume was *de rigueur*. Having left mine in America, I had to order a suit which a Chinese tailor made in twelve hours, and a new hat. The upper half of the suit was a sartorial triumph, but the lower left me filled with a terrible fear of the consequences which would ensue if during the day's proceedings it should become

necessary for me to sit down in the Japanese fashion. There was much greeting and bowing and saluting as the people assembled and then went aboard large skows which were to be towed out to the ships. As we cast off, the fog became denser and nothing could be seen a few yards off. Bells, sirens and fog-horns were sounding on all sides. After a quarter of an hour the skipper of the tug, who seemed to be steering rather aimlessly, got altogether lost. We could not find our ship, in fact the weather looked then as if there was no possibility of the review being held at all. It was a forlorn spectacle this cargo of top-hatted men in the grey morning fog lost on the glassy surface of the deep. What if we could not find our way back?—a fellow-passenger said these fogs often lasted for days. We had nothing to drink on board, and nothing to eat; dismal visions of casting lots for which hats should be first eaten arose before the mind. About half an hour passed and we seemed to be getting more lost—more lost. Presently a dark object loomed out of the fog. It was another skow-load of tall hatters. They were ghostly, silent, melancholy. The barge might have been laden with the damned souls of bad hatters being ferried across the Styx. In companionship of misfortune they drew alongside. Their hats were even more weird and uncanny than those of our craft. Men with large heads had little ones poised on them at various angles, small men wore large ones that pressed their ears outwards; some wore opera hats, others had hats brushed the wrong way, and some, with the rims bent upward fore and aft, were of shapes that dated from the Revolution. The two crafts waited and after a time, to our immense relief, the fog began to lift. One ship after another became visible and we actually found ourselves close to the *Asama*, on which the Emperor was to embark.

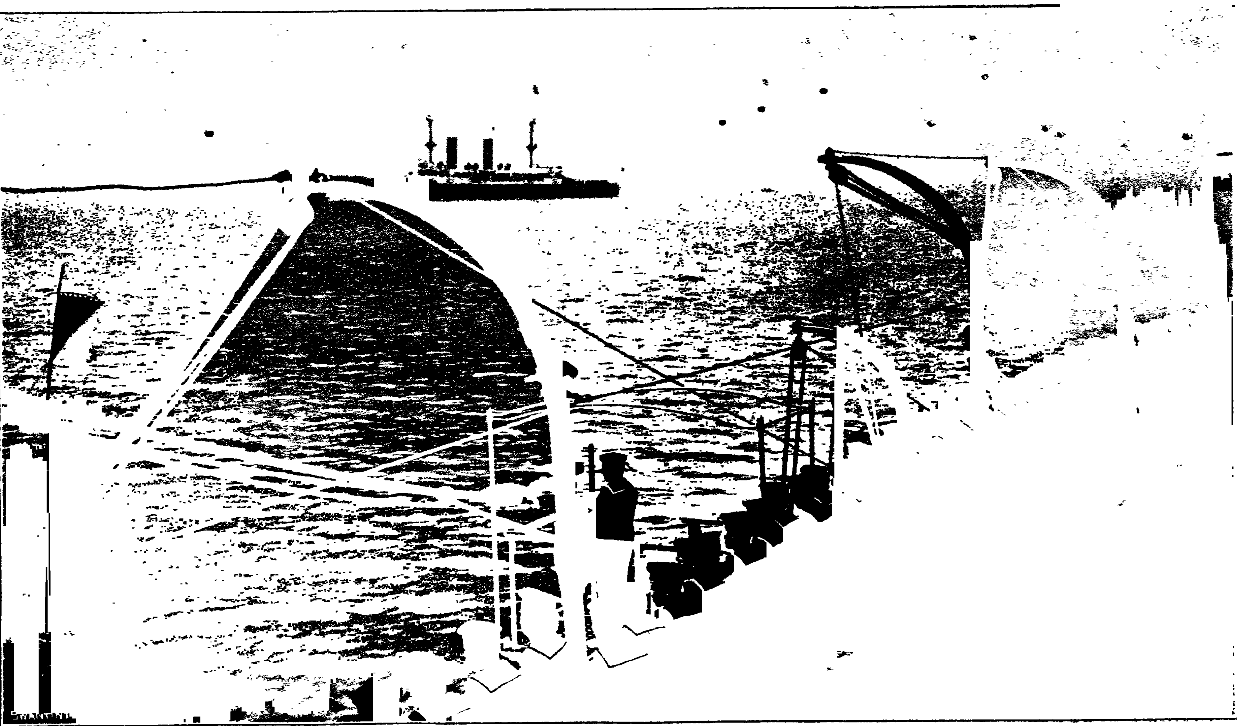
Soon after nine she began to fire the royal salute which told that his Majesty had left the shore. Presently a launch followed by another carrying the Emperor approached

and passed quite close to us. The top hats were removed, the officers stood saluting in absolute silence. In the same profound silence his Majesty was received on board the *Asama*, lined along the sides with motionless men. There was something much more impressive about this than the most enthusiastic cheering would have been. It is considered more respectful by the Japanese. Only once was he greeted otherwise, which was considered quite an inno-



The *Asama* saluting the Emperor.

vation: that was on the occasion of his entry after the victorious war with China, when the enthusiasm and loyalty of the people burst forth into an ovation such as few monarchs have ever received. As he stepped on board, the royal standard was floated from the mizzen-mast—a great crimson flag with the chrysanthemum in gold; the faint breeze aloft was just sufficient to flap out lazily its silken folds, and curiously from the moment it was unfurled, as if it were waving away the fog, the day began to brighten and clear gloriously. The white veil was withdrawn and showed the great fleet stretching away in four long lines, and beyond was the shore of the bay backgrounded by



The *Asama* with the Mikado on board reviewing the Japanese Fleet.

the mountains, gauze-like wisps of cloud festooning their slopes and summits. There was something that might dramatically appeal to the superstitious thousands who fringed the shore about this transformation scene which took place when Matsuhito Tenno, latest of a line stretching back unbroken for two thousand years, unfurled his standard of Emperor of the Land of the Rising Sun.

Precisely at nine-thirty the *Asama* began to move in the direction of the fleet, and then all the ships, including those of foreign nationalities, fired a royal salute simultaneously; the *Meyako* and *Chihaya* took up their places behind the *Asama*, which slowly and deliberately steamed down between the lines. She passed between the Japanese admiral's flagship at the end of the line and H.M.S. *Glory*, the flagship of the British admiral, which respectively headed the lines of Japanese and foreign vessels. The Emperor was greeted with three British cheers, as he passed, and as the Japanese have taken our navy as their model, each of their ships saluted with three cheers to the words "Ho hai" (Honourably salute) as he went along. Including the foreign ships, there were four lines; the tonnage of the Japanese amounted to 220,000 tons. The Emperor passed down between the first and second and returned between the third and fourth lines. The *Chiayuen*, captured from the Chinese, was at the end of the second line, a fine war trophy for that young fleet.


British Tars cheering the Emperor of Japan.

As we passed through these lines of grim death-machines one was struck with the thought of the wonderful things these people had accomplished in thirty years. What a retrospective review might pass through the mind of that

ing the years from 1903 to 1914, and thus create a new additional force of 85,000 tons in battle-ships, cruisers and torpedo-boats. Japan will then have a naval force amounting to 335,000 tons. At present there are 30,280 men in her navy, with a reserve of 4000. Whether she is going beyond what her resources prudently warrant is a question that has given rise to some discussion, but the expansion of the navy is immensely popular with the whole country.

After the naval review the Emperor went to Osaka to open the exhibition there. As the former showed what Japan would be capable of doing at sea, so was the latter a splendid review or demonstration of her commercial achievements. It was admirably arranged. In the industrial section there were sub-divisions according to the different cities and districts, so that going through it one got an excellent idea of the specialities and characteristic industries of the various localities. It was a particularly interesting exhibition, inasmuch as it mirrored exactly the life of the people in the transition stage in which it is at present. The influence of the West was apparent everywhere, but not always an influence for the better. Huge advertisements of beer were very much in evidence, a gigantic beer-barrel even invading the fine-art section. The picture-gallery suffered from the effects of a number of exhibitors who had been to Paris, where they just got a smattering of the French style, sufficient to destroy their own without thoroughly absorbing enough of the other to replace it. The water-chute was a Western institution which the little Japs took to with alacrity and enthusiasm, and crowds waited for hours to take their turn at it. Some of the boats laden with girls in bright kimonas made pretty pictures as they sped down with shouts emulating Earl's Court. Japanese 'Arry and 'Arriets are still distinctly more attractive than their Western equivalents. In the colonial section one got an idea of what Japan is aiming at in the

way of expansion and encouraging emigration. The Formosa exhibit was particularly interesting, and showed what a field she has in that country for the exercise of superabundant energies for some time to come. The machinery section more than any perhaps impressed one with the marvellous progress of these people during the past thirty years, and the amount that they have succeeded in accomplishing.

Starting from Kobe we journeyed through the inland sea to Moji, the most beautiful trip of its kind that I know of in the world.

On the other side of the harbour is Shimonoseki, where the celebrated treaty was signed. It is well fortified with forts perched right on top of the precipitous hills surrounding it. I managed to make my way into one of them and found the whole garrison hard at work at gun-drill with their big guns which with that elevation must have an enormous range. These Japanese soldiers appear to be perpetually drilling, or manœuvring, or route marching. I don't believe the men of any army in the world are worked as hard. The following day found us at Nagasaki, as usual crowded with shipping, this time including two Russian men-of-war. In the navy yard there were two cruisers in course of construction. It is a great coaling station; women as well as men take part in the work, coming alongside the vessels in lighters they fill and pass up the baskets of coal with marvellous rapidity. It used to be a curious sight to see the men and women when they had finished work peel off and go in bathing together to wash themselves, but this is no longer allowed. ' It was in Nagasaki that an order was promulgated ordering people to wear a bathing costume when bathing, a man took off his costume on emerging from the water and walked a quarter of a mile up to his house clad only in the innocence of a law-abiding mind. There were many Japanese on our ship going across to Korea, and great efforts are being

made by the Japanese government to encourage emigration thence. There is a recent regulation that each steamer going from Japan to Korea must carry seventy men and thirty women. There were several families on our ship going to settle there, and a few women going to join their husbands, who had gone before them ; there were a couple of engineers, and amongst men going on a variety of business, was a gentleman representing the Mitsui Company, who was going to collect or try to collect the sum of £15,000 from the Korean government for a vessel which was sold to do the duty of a navy for Korea. All the Japanese on board were in one way or another members of that great army of peaceful invasion and occupation of Korea that is quietly attempting to absorb the country into the empire of Japan.

CHAPTER II

THE PATH OF EMPIRE THROUGH KOREA

THE WHITE ROBED PEOPLE — PRETTY PRIESTESSES — THE JAPANESE RAILWAY — METHODS OF MODERN CONQUEST — UNDER WHICH FLAG — AN UPRISING CITY — JAPANESE MONEY-LENDING — A SHIPWRECK AND A RESCUE — SORROWFUL SEOUL — KOREAN MAGICIANS — THE BELL WITH THE WAIL OF A CHILD IN ITS VOICE — A CURIOUS RIFLE MATCH — THE POSTPONED JUBILEE — UNENDING WASHING-DAYS

MOST strange of countries is this hermit kingdom. It was a glorious bright morning when we woke to find ourselves anchored close to the shore off the little town of Fusan. The still water of the harbour had the deep blue of the Mediterranean, and the mountain on the seaward side, a suggestion of Vesuvius in its outline. Quaint junks nestled in an inner artificial harbour, and sampans were hovering around our vessel's sides. The curious feature of the scene was that the men in the sampans, in the junks, and all the people on the shore were dressed in white except for their broad-rimmed, conical, tall hats. The bright sun made their figures stand out vividly against the green fields or the brown cliffs so that they were visible at a long distance, and on the pathways the little figures passing and repassing looked like a number of white ants. The day I landed there was a Buddhist festival being celebrated, and the houses were gay with flags and the temples decorated. At one embowered in pine trees at the summit of the hill I saw a most picturesque and

interesting rite, where the first fruits of the earth, melons, rice and corn sheaves, and of the sea in the shape of a magnificent fish, and birds were offered by the priests, and two rows of charming looking little Buddhist priestesses or nuns took part in the ceremony. There was an ethereal lightness, a brilliant translucent effect given by these flowing garments of the crowd. The men looked serene and placid to a degree, either stalking along smoking their lengthy pipes or poised with legs tucked up by very short stirrups on the backs of their donkeys or very small ponies. Many had attendants



Pretty Japanese Priestesses assisted at the Buddhist Festival.

leading the animals, whose riders looked dignified and important in the extreme. A broad road ran along the cliff from the Japanese town to the purely Korean town about a mile away on the left. Near it was a Japanese military barracks, and along the open space in front of it, bordering the shore, the soldiers were drilling—a large number of Koreans were standing round, interested but very passive spectators. The men were put through the whole movements, their mode of an attack, deploying in open order, individual firing, and running forward quickly in sections, ending in a bayonet charge cheering as they skewered imaginary Moskovites.

Out here in the East, two instances of the invasion and conquest of a country may be now seen in progress which, I think, are without parallel in the world's history. I refer to the invasion of Korea by the Japanese, and the annexation of Manchuria by Russia. What makes the study of this novel method of invasion all the more interesting is that it is a fashion which, in all probability, will be followed by other nations as the world becomes more crowded and as



The main street in Fusan.

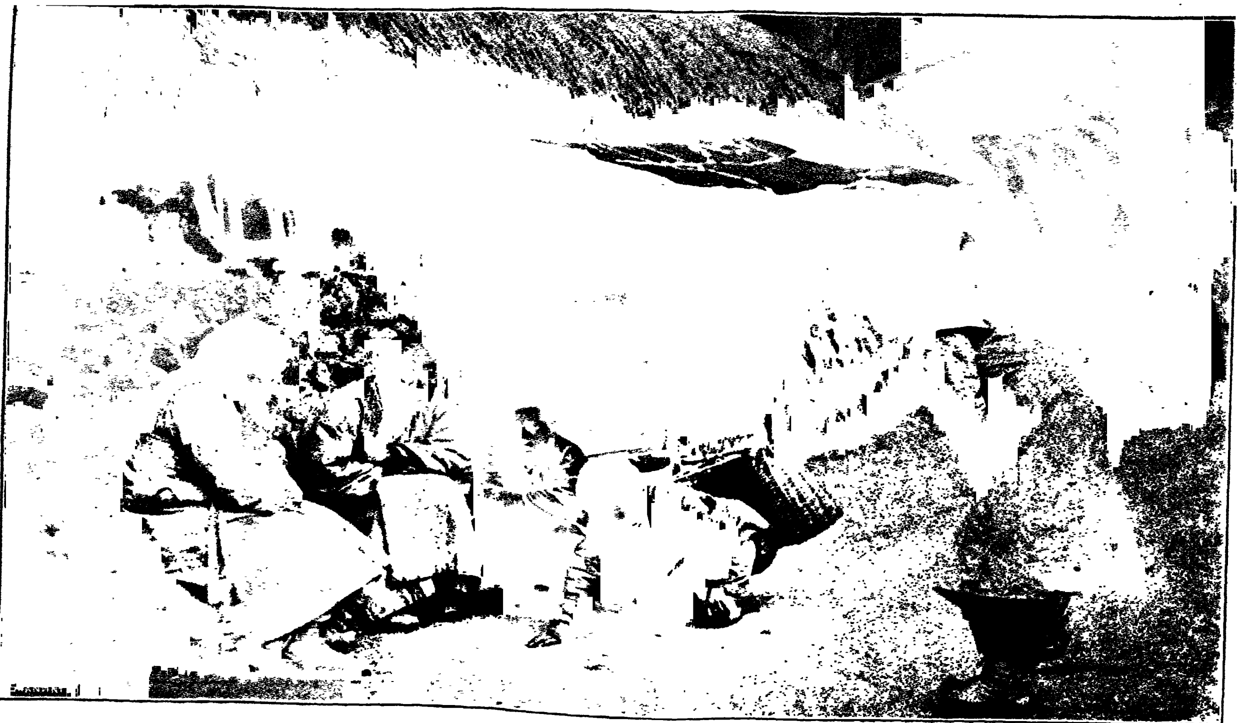
the power of money still further increases. It is a style of conquest which I can imagine, for instance, being applied in years to come to the South American republics by the United States. The method requires money, but not so much as a war does, and the results, if slower, are more complete and satisfactory. Missionaries have been the pioneers of conquest of most Western nations, and their occasional martyrdom has been the excuse for forcible annexation of territory. With this method practised by the Japanese and Russians, a line of railway is the pioneer of

advance after a certain amount of reconnoitring, so to speak, has been done by enterprising emigrants. The Japanese made and own the line of railway from Chemulpo to Seoul, they are making the line from Fusan to Chemulpo, and along that route is the main track of their acquisitive advance.

Fusan will be the southern terminus of this arterial railway system, which will be open for traffic within eighteen months. It is the nearest harbour to Japan, and a most perfect natural harbour it is, where all the war-ships of the East could find safe anchorage. Thousands of Koreans were at work when I was there, under Japanese supervision, constructing wharfs and piers, so that the vessels can load direct from the railway trucks and discharge into them. Deep cuttings and much filling in are necessary here, but labour is plentiful and very cheap. It is similar work to that which is being carried out on a more gigantic scale at Dalny, the terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway. Naturally Fusan is bound to become a city of considerable importance as soon as the railway opens and the shipping of the port increases. In anticipation of this the Japanese have managed to buy up all the best sites adjacent to the railway, and near the terminus right in the centre of the harbour a Japanese town of considerable dimensions has already sprung up. All round house building is in active progress, and wide, long streets are marked out with lines of stone foundations with the framework of wooden houses rising from them, which, when completed, will double the present size of the town. There is not a good site for a house or a shop now to be bought in Fusan, they are all in the hands of the Japanese. There have been numerous edicts issued from time to time by the Emperor against foreigners acquiring land in Korea, but, like many other enactments of the government in this curious country, they do not appear to be enforced. The Japanese own about one-third of the real estate in Seoul,

close on one-half of that in Chemulpo, and a considerable portion in three of the next largest cities. The Korean is, as a rule, an improvident individual in a chronic state of impecuniosity. He is always ready to receive a loan on almost any terms. If he comes across a person with say five hundred yen that he is anxious to lend, the temptation to oblige the lender becomes absolutely irresistible. The title-deeds of houses and lands are transferable documents. The possession of the title-deed, together with being on the ground, entitles the holder of the deed, according to law, to possession, and he can insist on any one else clearing off. The Korean accepts a loan for example for six months, which, being sanguine and rather careless, he promises to repay at the end of that time. The Jap to whom he has given his title-deed as security comes along, and when the money is not forthcoming, usually at first contents himself with squeezing a bit by way of interest from the borrower. He is not content with this, however, but sooner or later plants himself in the house, calls in the police, and gets the Korean turned out. It is not surprising, therefore, that among the people there is a very deep-seated hatred for the Japanese; but it avails them nothing, the Japs having come to stay mean to be their masters, and very severe masters they are.

The interesting question here, the question which puzzles the most thoughtful onlooking resident observer, is: Who is finally to have Korea? the Russians or the Japs? That, in fact, is the critical question, the bone of future contention in the Eastern hemisphere. This peninsula is the place particularly interesting to the war correspondent as in all probability it may be the scene of severe and most critical fighting in the near future. Gathering the opinions of people on the spot, one finds that they are unanimous, clear and emphatic. As long as one speaks to Japanese or to people with Japanese leanings they are unanimous, clear and emphatic in propounding the doctrine



In a Korean Village.

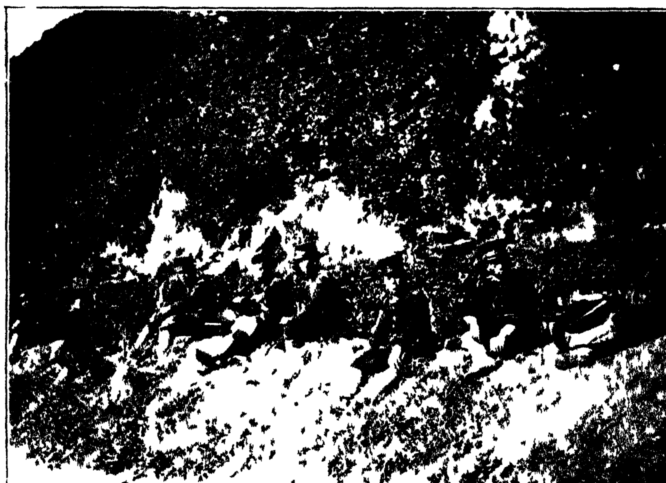
that Korea must, can and will come under Japanese rule and under no other. The Russians and their sympathisers are equally emphatic that it will never be annexed by Japan, and when you ask will Russia take it, your answer is generally a shrug of the shoulders and a quizzical look with a suspicion of a merry little twinkle in the corner of the eye. They can afford to wait, these Russians, and they know how to, and as a reward all things seem coming to them in this part of the world.

Manchuria is just twice the size of Japan, and to the fullest meaning of practical business politics they have now annexed it. Its annexation is a triumph of diplomatic bluff. The Western world has no idea of what a rich jack-pot these Russians have won in the international poker game. The mineral resources of Manchuria, as shown even by the surface scratching that has been done, are simply stupendous. As a wealth-giver, it will send more to St Petersburg for the next half century than India will to London.

It would look as if the imitative Japanese in Korea were just taking a lesson from the Russians in Manchuria, and following their example here. If there is one thing that the Japanese have reason to be superlatively proud of, it is their Intelligence Department. They can easily beat the Russians in espionage. They have had their spies for a long time past on the track of the Russians both here and throughout Manchuria, so that Tokio is as well informed as St Petersburg about every movement. The Japanese have just completed a great map that gives more details of that country, which may possibly be dotted shortly with battlefields, than anything, I feel sure, that the Russians can have.

Looking at the whole position from what we are in the habit of calling a common-sense standpoint, and with the white man's idea of fair play, we must bear in mind that the Japanese were done out of Port Arthur when they

had every right to possess it by the laws of victorious conquest. In the modern pressure of things the Koreans cannot continue to exist independently in this crowded world, where right is no defence against might. As a source of food supply, Japan depends to a certain extent on Korea Russia has territory sufficient in all conscience. Why should not Japan have Korea? Similar evidence of improvement such as our civilisation takes pride in is



Japanese Soldiers in Korea

visible in the territory under Japanese influence in Korea like that portion of Manchuria under direct Russian control wide streets, cleanliness, railways, telegraph lines, light, a proper supply of water, and adequate drainage. It is some compensation even when the robbing of the land is admitted.

The Japanese have one thousand soldiers in Korea ostensibly to protect the railway. The Korean army has been reorganised, trained and equipped under Japanese supervision, in fact, it is difficult to distinguish sometimes

between the Japanese and the Korean soldiers. This, a Japanese gentleman said to me, will be all the more convenient when the time comes, as drill and uniform will make everything ready to have the Korean army changed into so many regiments of Japanese soldiers. It is very problematical as to whether these Koreans will ever make soldiers fit for serious fighting, but there is no knowing what training will do.


Japanese Field Artillery Drilling.

There was a curious rifle match here recently, between a team made up from members of the legations on the one side and from Korean soldiers on the other. The legation team was a strong one and made good shooting; out of a maximum of a hundred, two of them scored ninety-five, and the worst score was not ten points behind that; but the Koreans, to their own great delight, beat them hollow. Three of them scored the maximum, and the lowest score among them was ninety.

The Japanese would probably do great things with this country if they got it. The Koreans show no signs whatever of progressing or moving out of their hermit isolation. They will be the same in a hundred years as they have been for the past thousand or two. The great unobtrusive conquest by rail and telegraph lines, the undermining by money power is sure, if slow, and when the time comes for the detail of unfurling the Japanese flag, it is not very likely to be strongly opposed by any power except Russia, and Russia may be fully occupied elsewhere.

A stay of a couple of days in Fusan gave me an opportunity of visiting some of the villages near. I have seldom

seen anything so primitive and squalid as their dwellings are. The houses, with mud walls, are huddled close together without any attempt at streets between them, only devious and labyrinthian pathways. The chief occupation of the men seems to be squatting on their mats, smoking their long pipes, and playing a game distantly resembling



Koreans Gambling.

dominoes; and the chief occupation of the women seems to be washing the men's white clothes.

On the journey from Fusan to Chemulpo we rescued a shipwrecked crew of Japanese. A little trading vessel, laden with a cargo of bamboo, had been dismasted four days previously, and the mast in going overboard had carried away the bulwarks and left the decks a-wash. They lost both their water and their supply of provisions, and we were very near passing without seeing them. The six men were gathered on the deck-house in the stern, which was the only part of the vessel clear of the water, but they

attracted our attention by waving a big flag. We bore down on them and sent a boat off, which took them and some of their belongings on board. Just as they were pushing off from the wreck we saw an old man, who afterwards turned out to be the owner of the vessel, go back on the wreck. He had forgotten his umbrella! Having secured it, they were brought on board, and we found that they had been four days without any food or water,

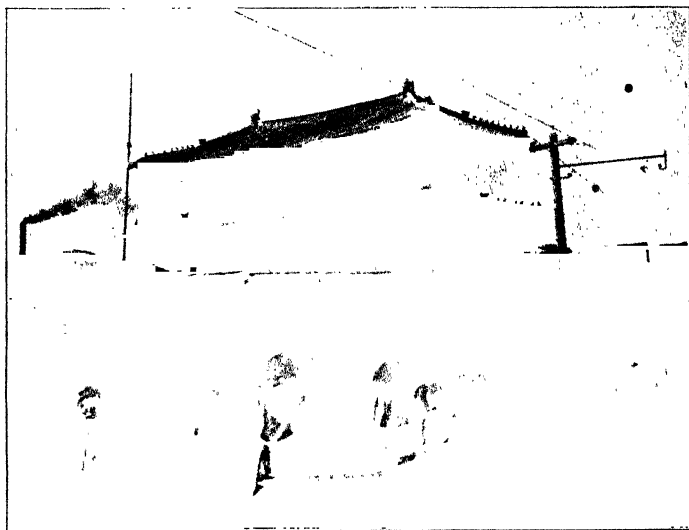


A Korean Cottage.

except the little they had been able to gather from a passing shower.

Chemulpo is a great deal more European looking than Fusan. There are solid stone and brick buildings, and a good wharf near the railway station. There is a curious mixture of inhabitants, amongst which the Japanese preponderate. The best houses in the neighbourhood are those owned by missionaries—a state of things which applies to the whole country, as far as I saw it. The journey up to Seoul is through an undulating, uninteresting country. I travelled up while it was raining heavily, and anything more dismal it was difficult to imagine. In costume the natives were quite prepared for such a downpour. The tall hat is one

of the most cherished of the possessions of the Korean. It is an open-work structure, through which his top-knot can be seen, and would be completely ruined by getting wet. In consequence every Korean carries in his sleeve a little extinguisher-shaped cover that folds up like a fan. This goes over the tall hat. Then he has an oilskin or oil-paper overcoat, and for greater security an oil-paper umbrella,



The Wall of Seoul.

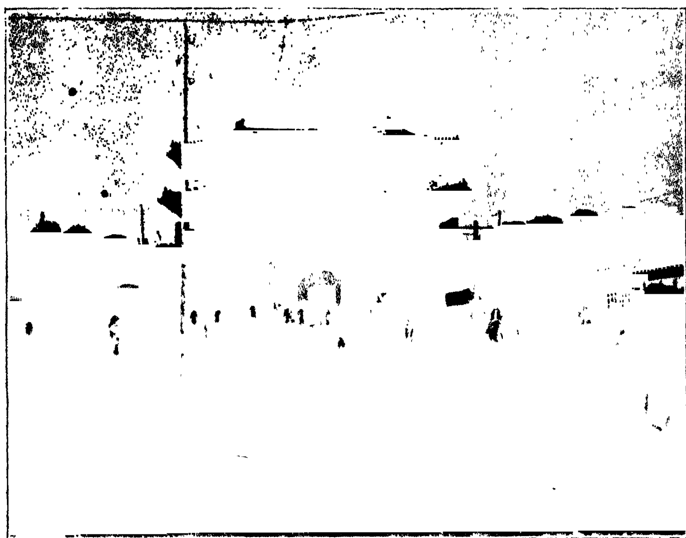
which surmounts the whole. The railway, after skirting the walls of Seoul, has a terminus outside near the south gate, close by the railway hotel—a quaint, straggling establishment occupied by an ex-missionary and his family, which has been the headquarters of the numerous concession-hunters who have haunted Seoul for years past—men who have got severe lessons in patience by oriental delays. A new and more substantial hotel is now being erected, where visitors can feel assured of getting good



Brass Ware Sellers in Seoul.

European accommodation; while at Fusan there is a perfectly delightful Japanese inn perched up on the hill, surrounded by a charming garden.

The wall that surrounds the city is more primitive looking than the larger structures of its kind in China. There was something absurdly incongruous on entering the gate to find an electric tram-car issuing from it. It stopped



The Electric Trams in Old Seoul.

at a little station-house outside, and the crowd of occupants streamed out, and were replaced by a crowd which was the equivalent in Seoul for what might be seen waiting for 'busses at Piccadilly Circus on a rainy day. These Koreans seem to take kindly to the electric tram, just as much as the Chinese take to the trains, notwithstanding any opposition they showed to their construction. After the tram had started I saw what a mistake I had made in not going by it rather than by 'rickshaw. The streets of Seoul are even

worse than those of a Chinese city. Every few yards it was only by vigorous gymnastic exertion on the part of the coolie behind that I escaped being upset. There is a great broad road running through the city, but off this the alleys are narrow and of indescribable filthiness.

There were to have been great festivities here the week I arrived, in celebration of the jubilee of the emperor, but they have been postponed until the autumn. The preparations were on a most elaborate scale, and already 800,000 dollars had been expended in actual outlay, apart from what had been pocketed by officials. Some of the items are rather curious and interesting. Korea has no navy and therefore was not in a position to reply to the salutes of foreign warships that were expected. The Korean government therefore bought an old vessel built in England sixteen years ago, and fitted her up as a warship, so that they are now ready for all the saluting they want; as a matter of fact, the representative of the company, who travelled over with me, had to content himself with a considerably reduced sum, after spending over two months trying to collect it. They spent 60,000 dollars on a banqueting-hall, at which a large number of Chinamen were kept working day and night, but it has been constructed in such a flimsy fashion that the foreign ministers are now very glad that they will not be obliged to trust themselves inside it. Foreign broughams and horses were imported, but no foreign-made vehicles could ever stand the roughness of the streets of Seoul, and they are now for sale. There was to have been a great garden-party to which 500 people, including all the foreigners, were to have been invited; and gorgeous pavilions, only half completed, were abandoned. Works of all sorts for the beautifying of the city were in progress, but everything was stopped when small-pox broke out in the Imperial palace, and Li-Hun, the son of Princess Om Young, was stricken.

The illness of Li-Hun gave rise to extraordinary pro-

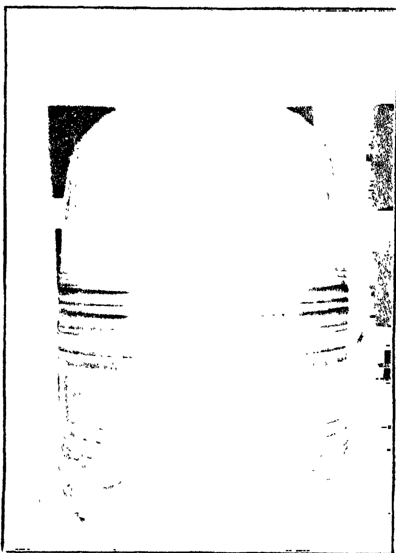


The Emperor of Korea.



The Korean Way of Ironing Clothes.

ceedings. Although there is a European doctor officially attached to the palace, he was not called in or consulted. Instead, all the most celebrated wizards, native doctors and magicians were summoned from all parts of the empire, and a perfect orgy of magic was held in the palace. The prescriptions or orders of the magicians were being carried out throughout the capital. Any violent movements were supposed to aggravate the evil spirit of the disease; absolute quiet was therefore maintained in the palace. The guards were not changed until they were ready to drop from weariness. All the works were stopped, as the doctors declared that every blow from a hammer would mean a pitmark on the patient's face. The weather seemed to hold no terrors for the Koreans. Every evening, wet or fine, as well as at other times a crowd of the poorest class of the population gathered outside the palace gates, from which at intervals a quantity of propitiatory alms in the shape of copper cash was thrown to them. They are a grotesque and motley lot of humanity. Those who wear tall hats, which are part of the national dress, have little extinguisher-shaped covers on them to protect them from the rain, while some have waterproof coats of oiled paper, and a few have paper umbrellas much the worse for wear. Their loose wet garments flapped dismally as they huddled to-



The Bell with the Wail of a Child in its Voice.

gether shivering around the gate, and a great wallowing scramble ensued when the shower of cash was thrown out over their heads. The great bronze bell in the centre of the town was tolled at long intervals, and boomed with a sad and sullen tone. It is one of the largest bells in the world, and when it was first cast it sounded with a cracked and harsh note. The magicians on being consulted said it would not sound right until a live child was given to it; so it was melted again and a baby was thrown into the molten mass. The Koreans say that the wail of a child may ever since be heard in its voice.

There is good reason to believe that the sickness in the palace was not an unwelcome excuse for postponing the costly festivities. The funds for them had been collected from the people, and the purchase of most of the material necessary, from champagne and foreign furniture to a fleet represented by a single vessel, had been effected. The officials had all made their handsome commissions, and from what one could learn the ready money was exhausted.

The palace which was the scene of the murder of the late Empress is now fast falling into decay. The circumstances of that tragedy very closely resemble that of the King and Queen of Servia; there was a similar surrounding of the palace, subordining of the guards, except a few who remained faithful at the cost of their lives, and then the desperate chase through the palace apartments until the unfortunate Empress was found and stabbed to death. Only a few months ago there was a movement in Korea towards changing the national costume of entirely white garments, but the decree was revoked, and the Emperor's proclamation that white, the colour of mourning, should still be worn until that crime was avenged or wiped out, met with universal approval throughout the country. This custom of wearing white clothes is one of the most extraordinary of this peculiar country; with streets several

inches deep in either dust or mud, it can readily be imagined what an amount of washing they must require. Washing is going on perpetually in fact, and the sound of beating the garments with sticks, which is the substitute for ironing, and has the same effect of giving them a polish, is always in one's ears.

CHAPTER III

IN THE LAND OF THE MORNING CALM

EUROPE MADE NEIGHBOURLY — THE TIMBER CONCESSIONS — A POSSIBLE "CASUS BELLI" — EXPLORING BYPATHS — SINGING-GIRLS — THE MAGNIFICENT "YANG BANS" — HAT-BUYING — OFFICIAL EXTORTION — A FIELD FOR MISSIONARIES—TROUBLE BETWEEN CONVERTS—EXTRA-TERRITORIAL RIGHTS—THE VILLA DWELLERS—IF CHRIST CAME TO KOREA

THE Trans-Siberian Railway will have a great effect in opening up this isolated country, inasmuch as it will bring Korea within seventeen and a half day's journey from London.

One of the points on which the Japanese have come to cross-purposes with the Russians already in Korea is about the telegraph service. The Japanese have a line of their own from Fusan to Seoul. The Russians are about making one, and made the extraordinary demand that the Japanese line shall be taken down until theirs is completed. A much more serious point of dispute, however, arises from a timber concession in the north, which they declare they obtained in 1896, when the Emperor was living for protection at the Russian legation. In order to work this concession for cutting timber on the slope of the mountains on the north-western frontier, a company has been formed under the auspices of the Russo-Chinese Bank, called "The Timber and Trading Company of Korea." For things like these this bank is extremely useful to Russia, as it acts as a nominee for the govern-

ment, and carries out enterprises which appear less serious than if undertaken directly by the government itself. Following out the idea, and putting it into practice with such success regarding the Manchurian railway, it was then put forward that the wood-cutters would require a military guard to protect them from the bands of marauders and robbers of which the Russian papers gave such an alarming account as infesting that region. The Japanese say that the men engaged on the wood-cutting are actually soldiers themselves, and that there is no reason whatever for military guards being necessary. It was a pretty little game to start, but the Japanese are doing their best to spoil it. Military to guard the railway, military to guard the timber-cutters,—where a mining concession was obtained it would naturally follow that the miners should also require military to guard them, and where Russians had the right of fishing should not the poor fishermen have the protection of soldiers to do sentry duty along the shore, and so on? The trouble that is brewing between Japan and Russia might any day be brought to a crisis by some such trifling matter as this timber concession or the construction of the telegraph line. It is quite obvious to any one travelling through these regions that both Powers are making the most active preparations for eventualities of the kind.

For those who wish to explore a country quite out of the beaten track of tourists this is the place to go to. The scenery, as well as the climate, is delightful all through the spring, summer and autumn; the people are kindly and polite to strangers, but of course the visitor will have to rough it in the way of accommodation, which is the penalty one must necessarily be prepared to pay for the delights of striking off through country which has seldom or never been visited by Europeans. The habits and customs of these people, primitive in one sense, yet possessing a highly developed and complex civilisation of their own,

offers a most interesting field for study. There is little of the morbid exclusiveness and detestation of foreigners that we find in the Chinese, but on the contrary, they are hospitable, cheerful and helpful to the traveller. Even the "yang bans" will be gracious to strangers. These yang bans or nobles are a curious lot; they do no work of any kind, and it is bad form amongst them to do anything at all, even so much as for one of them to carry his own pipe, which must be borne by a servant. These lead his horse and support him in the saddle, and a retinue of them are perpetually in attendance on the swell wherever he goes. The Korean dancing-girls are the equivalent to the Japanese geisha, and nearly all the institutions and customs of the country have their counterpart in those of China or Japan, which is only to be expected, as the civilisation of the former reached the latter by way of Korea. It was very amusing exploring some of this quaint country. At one town, seeing a lot of men selling hats, their stock displayed on mats laid on the street while they smoked beside them, I decided to buy one. While trying some on, a crowd collected and their faces were mirror sufficient to judge, which suited me best. By the time I had selected one, and reached the more important stage of getting at the price, I must have had at least a hundred assisting me. The first price asked by the vendor was twelve yen, which was greeted with expressions of derision by the crowd. I replied with an offer of one yen. He dropped at once to eight, and I rose a few sen. By indicating that I was about to transfer my custom elsewhere, I brought him down to four. I appeared to have the sympathy of the crowd, who evinced their approval every time I beat him down, and then when we agreed to three yen, I objecting to his final attempts to make me pay extra for the strings to tie it under my chin, they fairly yelled, and seemed highly delighted as I made a triumphal departure wearing their national headgear.



A Korean Gesang or Dancing Girl

They appear to be a people who take life easily these children of the land of the Morning Calm, and it is not surprising to hear that the missionaries find them a pleasant people to work amongst.

Any one travelling through the Far East cannot but be interested in making inquiry, at first hand, when opportunity offers, as to what progress is being made, if any, in converting the millions of Asiatics to the truths of Christianity. Never since the death of Christ were there so many teachers of His gospel; never was there so much expenditure of human energy; never were there such sums of money available for building churches and schools; never was the intellectual equipment of the teachers so good. As far as forty-five million souls are concerned (the population of Japan) they might be considered to be passing through a transition period that would incline them to the adoption of the religion of Europe, when they are taking up so much else that is European. It would not be surprising if, during the last thirty years, we had seen a large proportion of that people becoming Christians. But it is not so. In fact there is no movement in that direction whatever. On my way to Korea I passed along the coast of one province where three hundred years ago six of the great damios and their followers were all Christians. On Easter Sunday I attended church where I was told the largest congregation of native Christians was to be found. The *personnel* of the congregation was extremely disappointing. There were less than half a dozen men, and a dilapidated, derelict lot of specimens they looked; the rest were all women and children. The church was not half filled; the simple, yet eloquent, sermon of the earnest clergyman merited a larger congregation, and this was the best that Christianity could show in the capital city of Japan. There is great difficulty in getting at the correct statistics about conversions to Christianity in the East. How is the missionary to count them? By

those who are baptised? If so, he knows full well that many come and receive instruction and baptism from ulterior motives. Old men who have devoted the best part of their lives to labouring in this work, tell you perhaps, when you talk the matter quietly over with them, after reflection, that they can count say one or two or three genuine and permanent conversions they have been the means of making. I don't think we should judge harshly or uncharitably of the statistics sent home by missionaries, still less impute to them any intention of wilfully exaggerating the number of converts or "inquirers." It is not for them to be judges of the real motives of these people, and is it not only in human nature to be sanguine of the harvest of one's earnest life-labour? Coming down to hard facts, however, it cannot but be borne in on the mind of any impartial observer with absolutely irresistible, convincing force, that throughout China, Japan and Korea, Christianity is making no real progress whatever. There may be places where the returns show gains, steady gains perhaps, but where is there any sign of its laying hold of the hearts of the people? Some even hold that the number of genuine Christians in the East is steadily, slowly, but surely diminishing. We all know of the periods when there was every appearance of the whole East becoming Christianised. In the eighth century the Emperor of China issued an edict, saying that he had examined the doctrines taught by the Nestorian missionaries, and commended them to the people at that time; and when Francis Xavier went to Japan, hundreds of the leading men of the country embraced Christianity. Now we look in vain in China, Japan or Korea for any converts amongst the better and more intelligent classes.

In Korea we can study missionary work at its best. There is no longer any official persecution of missionaries or their followers. The people are mild by nature, and well-inclined towards strangers. Out of thirteen millions

the missionaries claim about sixty thousand as belonging to their various denominations, and that the number is yearly increasing. One can see in Korea the motives which, in my opinion, lead orientals to profess Christianity in more active operation than either in China or Japan. Here the people are heavily taxed and still more heavily ground down and tyrannised over by petty officials. The central executive government is weak in the extreme, and the power for squeezing of the local men amounts to a system of innumerable petty despotisms. The people groaning hopelessly under this burden are glad to find any means of relief or to seek any refuge that will afford them protection. This relief and refuge they find when they place themselves under the ægis of the Christian missionaries. We read in an editorial in the April number of the *Korean Review*, a periodical ably conducted by a Protestant ex-missionary: "Hundreds of people apply each year for admission to the Protestant missions, hoping thereby to escape official oppression." Their hopes are not disappointed and not only do they receive help against official oppression, but they have the support of the missionary power in all their disputes and lawsuits with their neighbours, and a powerful friend at court if they find themselves in the dock. There are constant complaints being sent of the Christian natives by local magistrates to the Imperial government at Seoul, and it takes up no small part of the time and attention of the foreign ministers there to keep the peace between the missionaries and their followers, and the Koreans, or to settle the disputes arising between Christian converts of various denominations. For some time past there has been very serious trouble going on in the province of Whang-Hai between members of the two Christian Churches which claim the largest number of adherents. Finally, the government sent up an Imperial inspector, who reported that the missionaries there had apparently usurped the power of the magistrates, were

levying money from the people for building churches, were issuing orders for arresting people, and inflicting punishment upon them. He says, "Outside two or three counties all the magistrates have been under this oppression, and with folded arms are unable to stir." "Receiving Imperial orders to look into this matter I have undertaken the task, and daily, crowds of petitions fill the courts. Depending on the influence of foreigners the issuing of orders to arrest is a matter of everyday occurrence." "Their runners are fiercer than leopards"; "many of them carry foreign guns, so the country people are afraid and do not dare to take action. A number of those already arrested have been set free by a missionary." He concludes his report by asking for permission to use soldiers to deal with the situation.

It is difficult to judge of what is really the position. The imperial commissioner in his lengthy report does not differentiate between the acts done by the missionaries themselves and by their followers. It is not likely for instance that the circumstantial charge he makes, of torturing prisoners who have been arrested, is a thing that would be countenanced by European missionaries of any denomination.

If to-day Christ were to come to Korea that is the state of things He would find amongst those who are bringing His message of peace amongst men to these heathens. There are seven leading denominations, and they have five different names for God, small wonder if these Korean coolies and peasants think they represent five different divinities. They find many of the missionaries housed in what are the most palatial residences of the land, and I travelled with one who was going to visit his wife and children, whom he could afford to keep in Switzerland and go to visit them during long vacations. Others give up their work to go into business. One is now a successful hotel keeper in the capital, another carries on a prosperous

publishing concern. One is almost tempted to digress into giving some biographical sketches which would be really amusing. I am fully aware of the delicacy of the subject of which I write. It is hedged around by a curiously impalpable barrier. Men in certain positions dare not speak their minds openly about it for fear of their words being misconstrued at home. The power behind the missionaries in America especially, and also in England, is great. The brand of "Atheist" or "Unbeliever" can easily be attached to a minister, so it comes to pass that one hears opinions in private that they dare not imperil their position by expressing openly. But the religion and its exponents that cannot stand criticism is not worth the following. Why therefore should there be a feeling that one should speak with bated breath of missionaries or fear to bell the cat in regard to those unworthy of their mission?

The lines on which missions should be worked are laid down in a very old book. What a missionary should do is told in plain and simple words. There is no complicated course to be adapted for new conditions. We have but to hark back to the old.

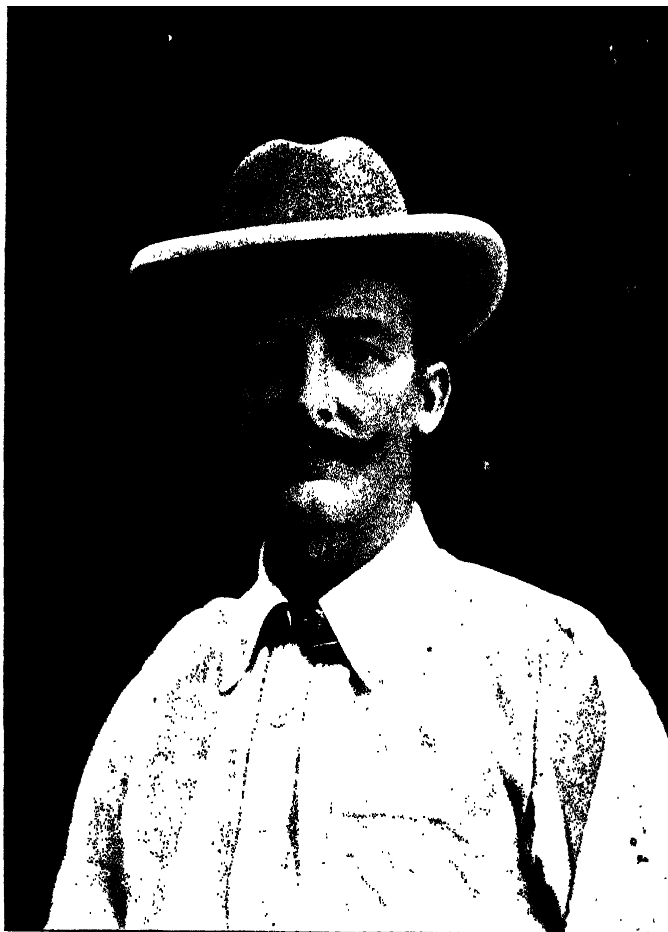
That howl for gunboats at the rumour of persecution was not His teaching. One thing should be thoroughly, completely, entirely abandoned, and that is all extra-territorial rights for missionaries or their converts. There ought to be no material purchase price offered for converts. Directly and indirectly this is offered now throughout the East in one form or another. The missionaries who have been most successful had no such inducements or protection to offer. You cannot mix business and politics with religion. "My kingdom is not of this world." These keen-witted orientals see full well that we are preaching a doctrine we do not practise; no wonder that from the intelligent classes no converts are made: they have seen the martyrdom of a few missionaries by a mob made the excuse for the robbery of provinces and of revengeful wars.

Yet if Christ came to Korea to-day He would find that all had not forgotten the lessons of His teaching. He might visit a little mud-walled hut thatched with straw where live two ladies, who for many years have been telling their neighbours of Him, and all the people round about love them and some come and pray with them, and they have become hermits in His service amidst the strange people in this hermit kingdom.

At the end of a bare room near where I write a man of fifty is teaching a class. Twenty five years ago he left Paris. Day in, day out, he has followed the dull routine of trying to teach these people. It is a far cry to the boulevards, it is easy to return there, yet he stays. Such as these want no extra-territorial rights, want no ministers to send them gunboats. They fear not for their lives, they have already devoted them, and daily in outstretched hands offer them for final acceptance. When one gets a glimpse of the lives of such as these they stand out in the mind with the illumination of a lightning flash making in our minds compensation for the multitude of those living in the smart and cosy villas, many of whom appear to look upon their sacred calling as one in which a secure if not a large income can be earned provided their governments do their duty by affording them complete protection. I don't believe Christianity will make any real progress in the East until the present system is altogether abandoned. A missionary in Canton told me that if all temporal advantages consequent on professing Christianity were withdrawn, he would lose at least four-fifths of his members, but that he would prefer to have the one-fifth that would remain than the larger number.

It is time this big question were looked into seriously with common-sense, and discussed without cant as without fear. If we are to teach these people religion we should hark back to the way the Apostles taught it. If we contemplate sending missionaries as advanced skirmishers of our civilisation and of an army of occupation—if we mean

THE PATH OF EMPIRE



Sincerely yours
George Lynch

to force religion upon these peoples—if we are to bribe them into accepting it, and if occasionally missionaries are to serve as live bait for catching provinces—well and good, our methods and our policy are consistent, but does any one think it would be the method of Him who said, "My kingdom is not of this world"?

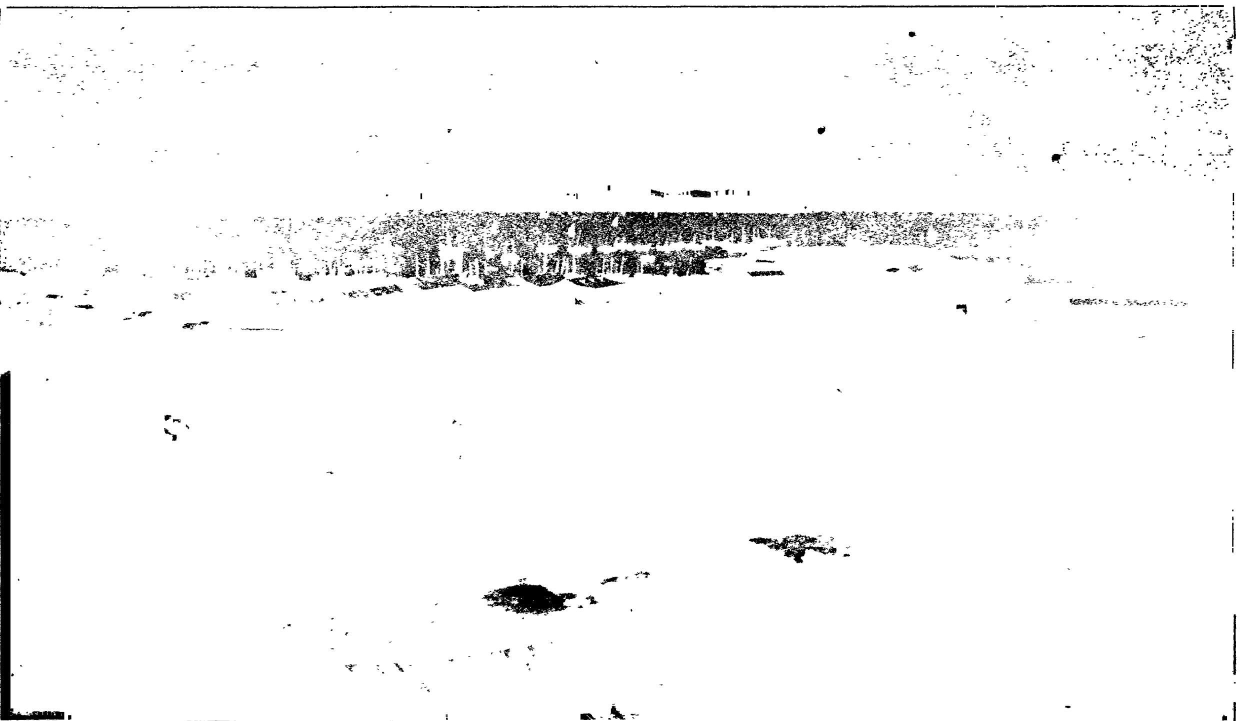
CHAPTER IV

DALNY, THE COMMERCIAL TERMINUS OF THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY

BY ORDER OF THE CZAR—ITS SCOTCH SABBATH APPEARANCE—RE-FORESTING—THE ELECTRIC POWER-HOUSE—SPECULATIVE HOUSE-BUYING—OFFICIAL PALM-GREASING—DALNY'S PROSPECTS—ITS NEW GARRISON AND FORTIFICATIONS—POSSIBILITIES OF DAMNATION

WHEN talking of my journey since I returned, I was surprised at being asked by many people, "Where is Dalny?" but after all it is not so very astonishing, because Dalny is not yet in any of the text-books of geography, is marked on none but the latest maps, and in fact had no existence as a town three years ago. The land where the city now stands was then only a barren treeless tract of desolation on the shore of the bay of Talien-wan. "I want you to build me a city there," said the Czar to General Sakaroff, pointing with his finger to the spot on the map, and he sent him off to build it, where as Governor of Dalny I had the pleasure of meeting him, still engaged at the completion of his task. The word Dalny means "far away," but after all it does not appear so far now when one can get from there to Moscow in thirteen and a half days. Coming from Pekin it is not necessary to go to Dalny: one joins the express at Tachechou, about eight hours after it has started on its long journey.

Going out from the hotel and walking down the street leading from it, one feels inclined to rub one's eyes or pinch oneself, as it seems hardly possible that this street is in a

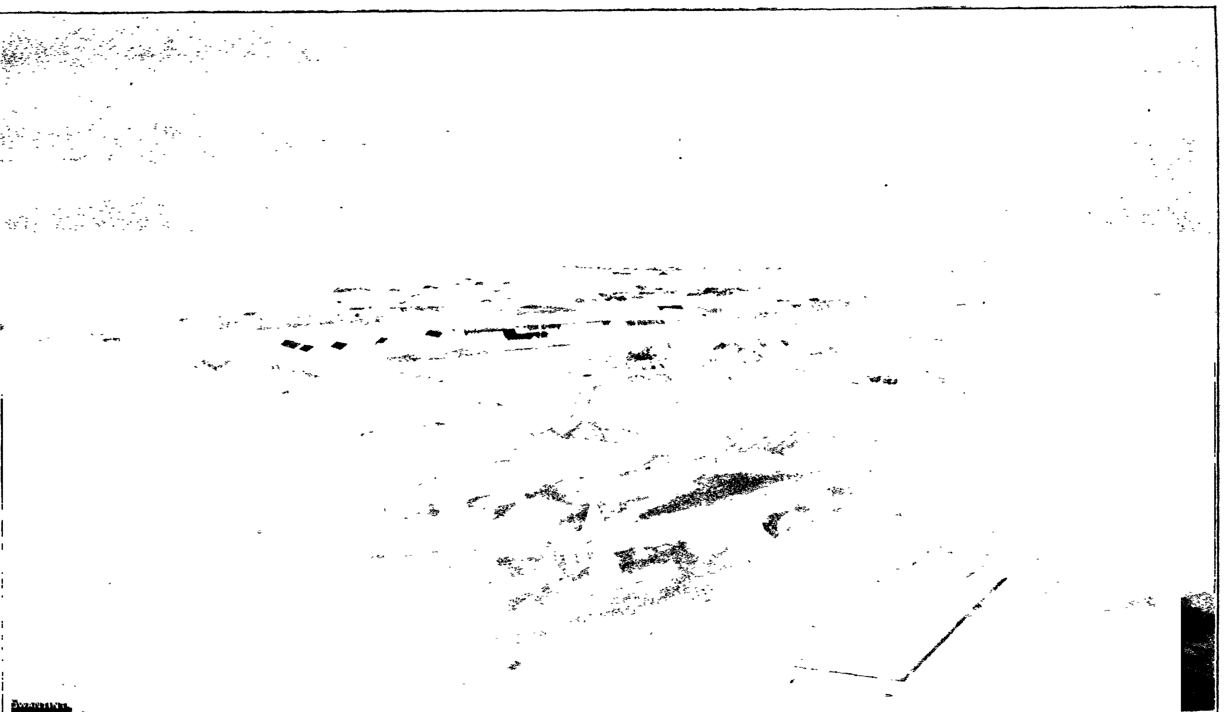


Where the Trans-Siberian Path of Empire joins the Pacific.

town in Manchuria, and that three years ago the ground we walked on and all round was a barren waste. The streets remind one of a respectable London or Glasgow suburb on the Sabbath. On each side are two or three storeyed dwelling-houses solidly built of brick, faced with cut stone, more solidly built probably than they would be in Glasgow or London. There is a narrow strip of garden about each, and a wall and iron railing bordering the road. They are of slightly varied design, some of them pretty, all substantial, and judging of the few I saw from the inside, very comfortable. The roads are well macadamised and the footpaths edged with cut limestone. The Sunday appearance is given by the absence of people from the streets. There is the city right enough, but where are the people? There are handsome administration buildings, a town garden planted with young trees, a park, three clubs—one for the workmen, one for the officials, clerks and so forth, and the most select, where the governor and the highest military men and officials may be met every day before tiffen, in fact there is a rule in the club that a fine is inflicted for every day a member does not put in an appearance about that time. A theatre is in course of erection and there is a large park laid out on the north side of the city. It is down at the water front, however, that the most astonishing work of all is to be seen. The *raison-d'être* of the city is in its being the chief terminus of the great Trans-Siberian Railway, and everything that modern engineering skill can accomplish is being done to equip it efficiently with every appliance and convenience for the cheap and expeditious transfer of goods from the railway trucks to the ships. The passenger station is up near the centre of the town, but the line runs down and forks out so that the trains can run right out on the piers alongside the steamers. These piers are built of huge blocks of concrete weighing fifty tons each, and have capacious corrugated iron sheds for storing goods. These and the piers themselves are lighted by powerful arc lights,

and the cranes, etc., are worked by electric power supplied from the central power house; outside the piers a long breakwater is being laid down which will afford most absolute shelter and smooth water inside it. Within the piers there is a dry dock already finished, and another larger one in course of construction. The pumping plants for these are worked from the central power station, and from there also the power is got for the huge machine shops behind them. These shops were interesting; I went through them with the manager, who, in answer to my inquiries as to why all the lathes and machines were being worked by Chinamen, told me they were much more capable than the Russians, both as regards learning quickly, handling delicate or complicated machinery, and also more reliable. He said that they were a sober and well-conducted lot, and the only fault he had to find with them was that they were now in such affluent circumstances on account of the large wages they were earning that they were prone to take many unauthorised holidays.

The power house itself is probably the most interesting and surprising thing in Dalny. It is the largest electric power plant in Asia. I went through it with an English engineer who was himself an expert in that line of work, and was full of admiration for details of workmanship that I was not capable of appreciating. Everything in the place had been made in Russia. "I would like to bring a few of our men from home," he said, "and show them this, it would open their eyes a bit." Only about half the generators and boilers already erected were in use, but provision is made in the building for putting in still more should they be required. Close by, an enormous building for another machine shop has just been completed where repairs and machine construction can be carried on on a large scale, the power being supplied from the central station. A new hotel is badly wanted, as all the rooms in the present one are perpetually occupied, and it is difficult for the casual



Dalny a-building.

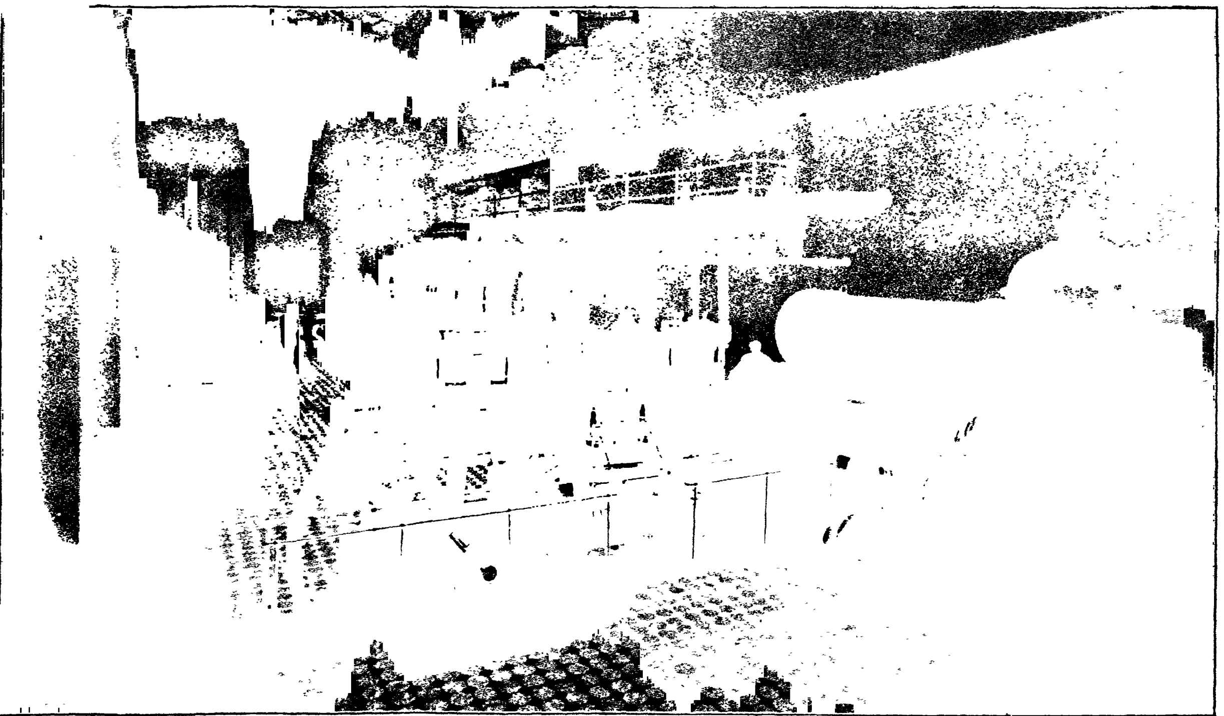
visitor to get accommodation. The erection of one was in contemplation when I was there, which may mean that by this time it is nearing completion, because in this rapidly rising city they do not waste much time pondering over things. A feature that one is struck with in the town is the absence of shops. There is only one good general store, but now, after the recent sale of land in the commercial quarter, we shall probably see them before long. This recent sale indicated the uncertainty with which many people regard the future of Dalny. The administration placed rather a high value on the lots, the knockout limit averaging twenty-five roubles to the square sazhen. The first day's sale went briskly enough with keen competition for the best lots, but after that, for the next three days, the bidding slackened off, many of the lots being withdrawn.

The Chinese quarter of the city shows more street life than any other, and that portion stretching from the centre of the town down to the wharfs looks busy enough, all the small one-storeyed houses lining the broad road are shops kept by Chinamen, Russians and the ubiquitous Japanese. It is a great drawback to the city that the surrounding country is absolutely barren of trees. As far as the eye can reach there is not a tree to be seen on the bare hills or flat shores surrounding the bay. It is simply magnificent to see how these Russians are going about remedying this natural defect. With overmastering energy they have set about clothing the hills, and thousands upon thousands of young trees can be seen, which they have already planted down their sides. Mr Witte said in his report to the emperor that " real progress is not measured by years but by the centuries," and here in this tree planting one can read this motto on the slopes of the mountains, as along the route one can read it in the solid buildings and massive bridges. All along the sides of the principal streets they have planted trees with a protecting railing round each, which in a few years' time will give them the appearance of

handsome boulevards. It is very surprising that more Englishmen or Americans have not been attracted to Dalny. There are not half a dozen to be found in the entire town, There is an American consul there, but, considering the growing importance of the place, and the number of ships going there now, I should think it ought to be very desirable to have other countries represented there too. The British consul from Chefoo, which is only twelve hours distant, paid his first visit to Dalny just a short time ago, and expressed his astonishment and admiration at what he saw. But why in the name of all that is business-like did he not visit the place before? The city was being erected there under his nose so to speak, and erected with a rapidity that demanded a large and immediate supply of machinery, tools and so forth, that English firms were certainly in a position to furnish. Surely it is the duty, or ought to be, of our consuls to be on the lookout for and report the existence of such a newly born market, and this vigilant commercial scout comes to visit the city nearly three years after the building of it had been started, and when it is practically completed.

There is a yacht club at Dalny with a flag of its own, and a fleet of I forget whether it is two or three yachts. I went for a sail in one belonging to Mr Soper, one of those genial and hospitable Englishmen whom it is so delightful to come across in far-off places like this. It is an ideal bay for yachting, and the journey across to Talien-wan and back just makes a delightful trip.

One splendid thing about the place, and one which should contribute in no small degree to its future prosperity, is its magnificent climate and bracing air, which cannot fail to act as an inspiring stimulus to its inhabitants. Living ought to be cheap there with the frequent steamers to bring supplies, as well as the railway, and it must not be forgotten that it is a free port, which means the cheapening of these



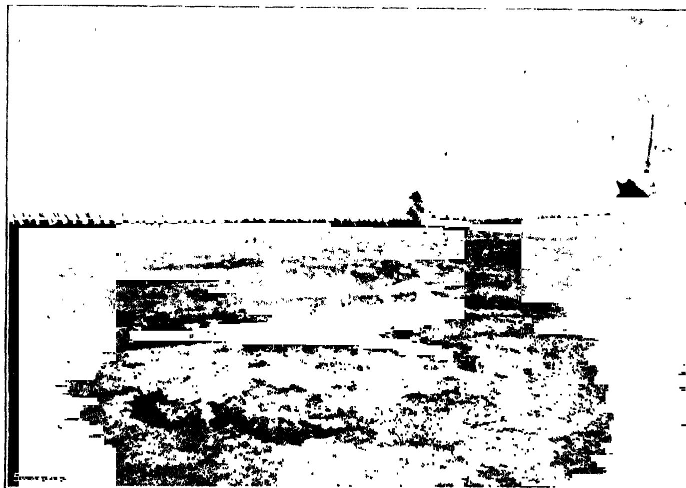
The greatest Electric Plant in Asia ready to supply Dalny with all the power it wants.

luxuries of life which are really a part of its necessities, more especially out here in the East.

The express train leaves Dalny now twice a week, on Saturdays and Tuesdays at eleven o'clock at night, reaching Moscow at one-thirty on the Friday and Monday week following, thus making the journey of 8110 kilomètres in less than thirteen days. With the fares only 260 roubles first class, and 166.50 roubles second, there can be no doubt or question that this route will soon become immensely popular with travellers to and from the East, and the town will lose some of the appropriateness of its title, which translated, means "far away." The city itself has been built by Chinese labour, imported principally from Chefoo. Fifty thousand Chinese have been landed here; the majority, of course, were sent up country to work on the railway, and may be seen right on into Siberia. Although the pay seems low to us, it is considerably higher than the wages these coolies ever earned at home. They are paid now on an average about 40 kopecks a day. It varies: in some districts they get as high as 60 or 70, and in others as low as 20.

There is much evidence of newly made money about—and much money being made off the inhabitants. Those who are familiar with business methods in China, such as contractors, and those who go after railway concessions and the like, have some idea of the extent to which bribery in the shape of commissions, etc., is absolutely necessary in order to do anything there, but the Chinaman is a mere 'prentice hand in comparison with the Russian. This latter is an artistic expert at the game. It is generally admitted that there is one man in Russia who is unbribable, and who will not take a tip, or a commission, or a share in the profits of a contract, and that individual is the Czar. Of course there may be another or others, but I have never heard either Russians themselves or foreigners insisting on the point. It would be most interesting if it could ever be

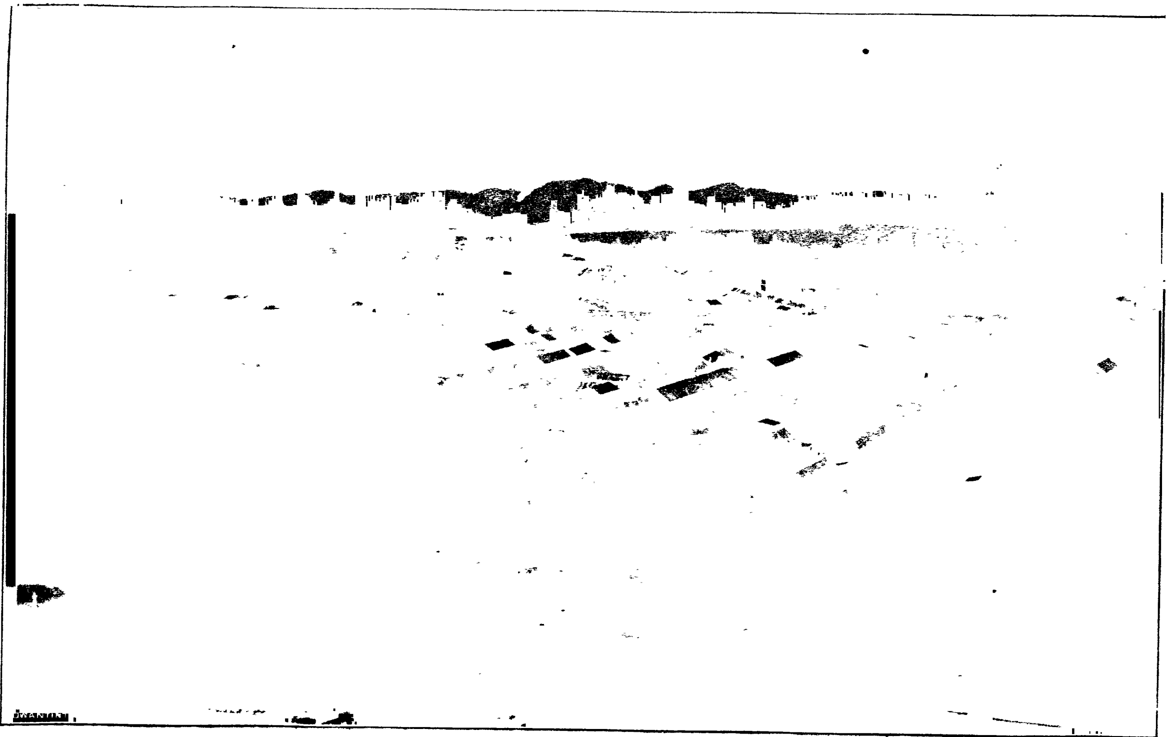
ascertained, to discover what proportion of the immense sums nominally expended on the Trans-Siberian Railway found its way into the pockets of engineers, contractors and the host of officials who have fattened on its construction. The agent of an English machinery firm at Dalny told me that he had made a sale of some goods the previous



The Parade Ground at Dalny.

day, which were lying in Shanghai. He quoted a price in taels. The Russian official who bought them after he had agreed to the price, told him to make out the invoice for the same number of roubles. The tael is worth one shilling and eightpence, the rouble two shillings and two pence, and the official would look after the difference. The system of tipping and blackmail ramifies everywhere. A merchant assured me that he had to tip the men on the railway who greased the wheels of the trucks which were loaded with his goods.

When I was in Dalny, the Governor and the leading officials asserted and explained that it was purely a



Dalny—the Administrative Quarter.

commercial city, that they hoped to make it the Shanghai of Manchuria, and that they expected merchants of various nations would come and settle there and open establishments on the town lots which were to be sold. They were given to emphasising that in no sense was it to be a military station. Port Arthur was to be the military terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway—Dalny was to be its commercial terminus. But since then the Conference at Port Arthur, under the chairmanship of General Kuropatkin, has been held, and as one of the results we find that Dalny has also to be fortified, and preparations are already being made for garrisoning the town with 12,000 troops. The want of reliance on Russian declarations is largely accountable for the hesitancy of foreigners in embarking capital, in buying town lots, and establishing business there. It is all very well to say that Dalny is to be kept a free port, and that every inducement and facility is to be given to encourage foreigners to go there, but they are apt to speculate as to how long such a state of things may last. There is a feeling of insecurity of tenure from past experience of Russian promises which it is difficult to eradicate from their minds. The experience of Vladivostok is a disagreeable warning.

CHAPTER V

PORT ARTHUR, THE MILITARY TERMINUS OF THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY

DENIED ADMITTANCE—RUSSIAN NAVAL MANŒUVRES—FULL SPEED TO THE HORIZON—A TOWN OF FEVERISH ACTIVITY—WHOLESALE EVICTION—WONDERFUL FORTIFICATIONS—DREDGING OUT A NAVAL BASE—BUILDING THE NOVI GAROD—THE CONFERENCE AT PORT ARTHUR—ITS RESULTS—A RUSSIAN VICEROY FOR THE EAST.

HAVING arrived off Port Arthur during the night we did not enter the harbour but anchored outside. In the morning we found ourselves under the immense perpendicular cliff at the right-hand side of the narrow entrance. It reminded me somewhat of Santiago harbour, and the forts guarding it were similarly placed to those which I had seen so repeatedly bombarded by the American fleet during the siege.



Port Arthur, looking towards the Back of the Forts.

Nature has made it one of the strongest harbours in the world, and the Russians have availed themselves of the natural opportunities offered them as much as we have done in Gibraltar. As we were about to weigh anchor and go in, a Russian naval officer came on board and directed us to wait until the afternoon as some naval manœuvres were

about to take place. Presently cruisers and battleships commenced to come out one after another through the narrow entrance and anchored in a line outside. The first to emerge was the admiral's flagship, which the others saluted as they passed. Two flag buoys were anchored outside this line. After about an hour, which was occupied in much signal-



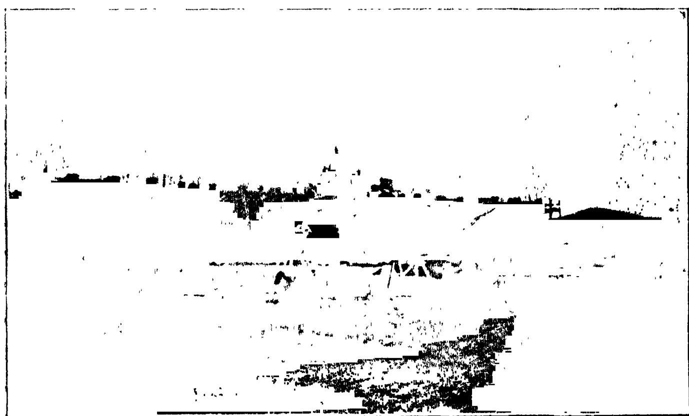
The Governor of Port Arthur and his Staff.

ling, the vessels in turn weighed anchor and starting at full speed passed between the buoys and sped off to different parts of the horizon, leaving lines of heavy smoke that radiated fan-shaped from the harbour's mouth and hung in the still summer air even after the vessels had disappeared altogether. Three hours afterwards one of the vessels reappeared, first a blot of smoke increasing to a dense streaming cloud until the hull appeared with a white streak of water waving from bows and stern. It appeared to be a

test of speed, they were all evidently stoking up as hard as they knew how, and some were going at a terrific rate as they returned between the flags. I have heard from British engineers who know something about the Russian navy that they have a very poor idea of how to treat machinery and that they never continue to get the speed they ought to out of their vessels after they are a year in their possession. When we were allowed to go inside during the afternoon on passing through the narrow portals of the harbour one saw at once what an impregnable retreat Russia has got in the Pacific. In addition to the elevated forts there are batteries of quick-firing guns near the water's edge, torpedo stations and a house with cables leading from it, which showed that the mouth of the harbour was evidently mined. At the inner side of the fort, to the right of the entrance, most elaborate work was in progress, and all over the summit of the Gibraltar-like rock it was blue-spotted with a multitude of Chinese coolies. On the shore side inland the place is as well adapted to defence as towards the sea, an entire circle of hills surrounds the basin of the harbour and forts crown them all. Distributed amongst them are thirty-two twelve-inch guns, fifty six-inch, and sixty rapid-firing ones. There are powerful searchlights at the entrance of the harbour and on some of the forts behind, and a wireless telegraphy installation was in course of erection on the cliff at the harbour's mouth which will enable the garrison to communicate with the ships of the fleet far out to sea. There were ten cruisers and battleships in the harbour when I was there, and there must have been close upon thirty destroyers and torpedo-boats, which I was perpetually coming upon in unexpected places. The harbour is rather small for the amount of shipping, but it has been rapidly enlarged on the western side where dredgers are hard at work which will give thirty feet anchorage at low tide. The result of their labours was already apparent;

and when their plans have been completed, they will have room to accommodate more ships than Russia is ever likely to have in the Pacific. Sampans swarmed round the vessel when we came to anchor close to the shore and fought for our custom. We had to anchor fore and aft as there is not sufficient room to allow of ships swinging with the tide. There was quite an astonishing amount of bustle and activity when we landed on the crowded quay. It was altogether different from any other place I know of in the East. Every one seemed to be busy and in a hurry, an overmastering energy seemed to be driving streams of coolies that jostled and shouted and pulled heavy loads, and the crowd of coolies seemed insufficient for the work that was to be done. A line of junks near the landing-place heavily laden with cargo was being discharged by Cossacks. Every few yards one passed Russian soldiers, gold-braided officers in their smart light grey overcoats, or companies tramping through the streets in their simple war soldier outfit and bayonets always fixed. All those who were not Chinese seemed to be in uniform: 5000 fresh troops arrived the day I landed. I was told troops often arrive but seldom go away. There must be an enormous garrison there at present, and a resident there whose chief pastime is horse-riding told me that in the course of his rides he is astonished at the number of new barracks he finds being built in various directions within the twenty-eight forts that crown the environing hills. The most drastic and startling of their various preparations for accommodating a still greater number of men is the order that has been issued that almost the whole of the old town is to be evacuated by the business and commercial people who at present occupy it. All those who have offices or residences hold them under leases from the government in which is the clause that they must clear out on receiving six months' notice. This notice they have received, and the whole of the old town is to be converted into a huge

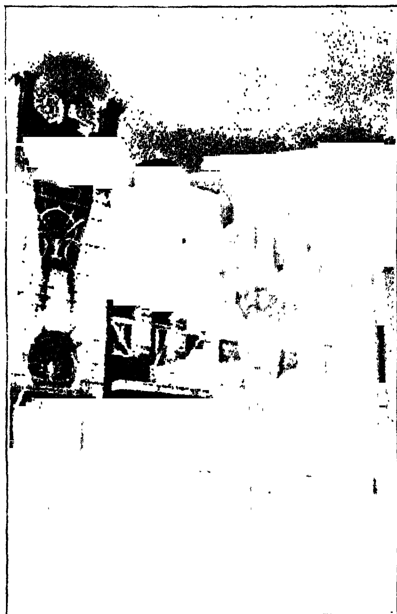
barracks. The new town is being prepared for them, however, and the erection of it is to be seen in feverish activity of progress about a mile from the old one. It is planned on the broad and ample lines of Dalny. As yet only a small proportion of the houses there are completed, but from the uprising walls one can get a good idea of what it will be like. The old town was woefully deficient in the way of hotel accommodation, but quite a good hotel is almost completed in the new. There is



New Town, Port Arthur, a-building.

a fine restaurant which was crowded with Russian officers and their best girls drinking champagne, and a military band was playing in a pavilion in the centre of a park which had only just been laid out, to an audience of half a dozen servant maids and children. There is something splendid in the thorough-going and masterful way that these Russians go about things. Once that the Imperial fiat goes forth that a thing is to be done they set about doing it with a determination which bursts the bands of official red tape that hinder progress. Here as well as at Dalny, Harbin and the rest of Manchuria are

to be found all the evidences of their building, not for temporary occupation, but because they are here to stay. There are iron tablets in the park with the legend, "Keep off the grass," although the newly laid hay seed is barely beginning to sprout. The massive walls of a cathedral church rise higher, and the building is nearer completion than the houses that are to supply it with a congregation. The style of architecture of the houses is rather French, and in the ornamentation *l'art nouveau* is very much in evidence. In the principal restaurant in the old town there is very much the air of a new mining centre except for the prevalence of uniforms, quite the same bustle and activity, money being spent as quickly as if it were as quickly and as easily made. A lot of it undoubtedly is, as the multitudinous contracts of all sorts are gold mines to many. Through the streets and from the slopes surmounted by the forts one sound is perpetually in the ear, the straining squeak of the Chinese wheel-barrows. It is as if the working of the labouring muscles of that multitude, who with yellow faces glistening with sweat pull or push or stagger under loads, were made audible. They work hard and work willingly for they are all earning better wages than they ever knew of before. What a difference they would make in the output



Specimen of the Architecture.

of the South African mines if they were to be brought over to replace Kaffir labour!

Even the most casual visitor, although his drives in the environs will be circumscribed and he will find himself constantly stopped by sentries, can see enough to appreciate General Kuropatkin's statement during his recent visit that Port Arthur is now impregnable. An elaborate system of land mines are part of the defences of the forts



The straining squeak of the wheel-barrows is perpetually in one's ears.

inland, and as much attention has been given to these land fortifications as to those at the harbour's mouth.

In the event of a war with Japan the supreme importance of Port Arthur as a naval base must be obvious. At present the Japanese fleet in the Pacific outnumbers that of Russia and the second part of the manœuvres we saw when coming in would probably be witnessed shortly after the outbreak of hostilities. The number of Russian vessels in Asiatic waters now (October 1903) is 45, with 999 guns and 13,500 men. As fast as the new ships are being turned out from the French, German or American dockyards, it is to the East they are being sent. Over Korea the war cloud lowers.

The recent conference at Port Arthur has been productive of many results, but one puts all the others into insignificance by comparison. The Czar in future is to have an understudy in the East. This new viceroy is Admiral Olexeiff, who will have complete control of the whole Amur district, Manchuria, the Russian fleet, and will have much to say to the direction of Russian diplomacy in the East. It is not surprising that the Czar is taking such



A Droski in the Novi Garod, Port Arthur.

a step. The immense distance necessarily caused delays in communicating with St Petersburg, and in getting the Asiatic department there, more or less hide-bound with red-tapism as it is, to move quickly. Now the viceroy will practically be Emperor of the East for all lesser things than making war or initiating big diplomatic moves, and it is yet to be seen whether the Russian minister at Pekin is going to be virtually under his control, or whether the actions of that minister will be a source of friction to the Imperial Government, and a further source of mystification to those whose duty it is to study Russian methods. Much more even than Lord Curzon is to England will the new Eastern viceroy

be to Russia, and the Russian Government has more sense than to think as we do that seven years is too long a time to grudge the viceroy the tenure of his office. They do not depose their useful governors as quickly as we do, or consider that a great portion of their empire should be merely used as a probation place for their best statesmen to be moved out of when they have just reached the height of their usefulness. Successful as has been the progress of Russia heretofore, there is every reason to think that under this new arrangement of decentralisation that progress may become more active, more independent and more strenuous. The majority of those Russians to whom I spoke about the new viceroy were of opinion that he might be considered as belonging to the war party, and if they are correct in their idea, it will be an important factor in increasing the probability of an outbreak of hostilities, perhaps on some local and comparatively trifling issue, between Russia and Japan.

CHAPTER VI

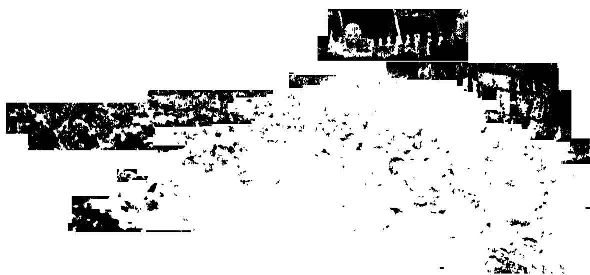
PEKIN REVISITED

THE NEW LEGATION QUARTER—MONSEIGNEUR FAVIER AND THE DOWAGER-EMPRESS — THE PEKIN RACES — ATTITUDE OF THE NATIVES TOWARDS FOREIGNERS—SIR ROBERT HART—MUCH-DRILLED SOLDIERS—COSMOPOLITAN BEACH-COMBERS AND THEIR SALOONS—NIGHT ON THE WALL—WATCHMEN AND CARRION DOGS—THE VOICES OF THE DAWN

WHEN I left New York there were rumours in the press of coming trouble in China. Crossing the continent to San Francisco these rumours condensed into definiteness of alarm. The American editors seemed prepared for trouble in China, but from the time I landed on the other side of the Pacific the signs (or hope if you want the truth) of prospective trouble began to diminish. The *crescendo* from New York to Honolulu was changed to a *diminuendo* from there to Pekin. The last time I was here was when I came up with the forces that relieved the legations, and I returned to England a couple of months afterwards. Parts of the city are now hardly recognisable. The train lands one outside the water-gate, through which the British entered to relieve the legations. That sewer entrance has now been enlarged to the size of a gate above which is the suggestive inscription, "Water-gate, 1900." In that portion of the city immediately inside it there is hardly anything to recall the legation quarter of 1900. Where the barricades crossed the streets of ruined houses there are now well-kept boulevards with solid buildings on each side and more elaborate ones in course of construc-

tion. Sentries of various nations stand at the gates of their legations, a newly built Roman Catholic cathedral towers higher than any other building, and a multiplicity of post-offices afford half a day's occupation in search of an expected letter. There is hardly anything suggestive of China about this legation city, except perhaps the Pekin carts and well turned out servants. The chief topic of interest when I arrived was the races which were being held the following week. As to any prospect of trouble in China this year similar to that of the Boxer troubles of 1900, the idea is considered ridiculous by those best qualified to express authoritative opinions. Dr Coltman, who was considerably interviewed just before I left America, appears to have been the *fons et origo* of most of this stream of alarmist opinion. In these interviews he poses as the man who warned the ministers of the coming Boxer troubles. I can vouch for two of them at least having no recollection of these warnings, and one of them pointed out to me that if Dr Coltman was so sure of the coming trouble it was curious that he should have allowed his wife and children to remain in Pekin. I again had the pleasure of meeting Monseigneur Favier, who unquestionably did warn the ministers and who was better informed than any of them of the imminence of the trouble. He agreed with every one here that there was no sign of any repetition of the movement of 1900 or of anything that need disturb or alarm foreigners as far as one could see ahead. Mr Conger and the representative of the British minister whose vacation is eloquent, also agree. Monseigneur Favier described to me his interview with the Dowager-Empress—how with clenched hands she spoke directly to him, not needing an interpreter—"There will never, never be any such thing again I promise you as long as I live." There were tears in her eyes and her voice was tremulous with vehemence, with disappointment and regret for a big mistake?—perhaps. How interesting it would

be to get at the real working of that extraordinary woman's mind while those two sieges of the legations and of Petang were going on within view of the palace. She could watch the legations from Coal Hill, and Monseigneur Favier told me she could be seen occasionally on the eminence nearest to Petang and was within rifle range once, but he forbade the defenders to fire at her. If I might hazard



The Lotus Pond in the Forbidden City, Pekin.

a guess I would say that it was the wish of her heart that the Boxer wave would have been strong enough to have swept every foreigner off Chinese soil without her being committed or identified with them. There is something very dramatic and tragic about that old woman looking on day by day at these two sieges. "Letting I dare not wait upon I would." What conflict of opinion must have been in her advisers' counsels—the men that knew the power of the foreign devils, the men that were blinded and wrapped up in the flame of patriotism.

Try to reversé the position and imagine that China had done unto England, the United States or to the other nations as we have done unto her—armed proselytism—annexation—the forced invasion of our emigrants while their immigrants are forbidden our shores. The keen-sighted Empress saw that these patriot rebels were not going to succeed and their failure was forcibly driven home when she had to fly from Pekin. She stayed on so long that she might easily have been captured if the cavalry of the allies had been alert and active enough. It is quite clear now that she and her Court have been taught a severe lesson which they feel profoundly. There will not be any serious attempt with Imperial connivance in the direction of ousting the foreigner. Let bygones be bygones be her motto, she is now all graciousness and the courtesy extended to foreigners is without precedent.

There is a big thought ever present in the mind of the onlooker here—if China were to Japanese herself, if she were to do what Japan did thirty years ago, that revolution would be the biggest historical event that has ever taken place on the face of this planet. I believe it will come, but there is no sign of it yet. One would think that with this model legation city in the centre of Pekin it might teach these people something, but it is not so. It is true they are making a few decent roads and they are lighting some of the streets, but that is nothing.

I was very curious to see what would be the attitude of the people towards foreigners and was quite surprised at what I found. There is nothing in their manner that is offensive or even unfriendly when one wanders about the streets of Pekin. It is difficult to imagine that these are the same people who three years ago were attacking the legations. One can go anywhere, and I have seen several ladies walking around by themselves — that type of wandering spinster with guide-book, blue glasses and grizzly hair, that one so frequently meets in the East. The Llama

Temple and the Temple of Heaven are open to visitors as before, but one is no longer allowed to mount Coal Hill from where the best view of the city can be obtained. It certainly looks a beautiful city when the leaves are coming out on the trees that grow in almost every courtyard, and the palace roofs shine above them with that wonderful shimmering iridescence of the yellow tiles



In the Temple of Heaven.

more resplendent than if they were made of gold. When at Sir Robert Hart's I remembered that the garden itself had been a fighting-ground, and the present house is a new one erected on the site of the one that had been razed to the ground by the Boxers. His band of twenty musicians, all Chinamen, had been dispersed in various directions but had long since come back; they played in a way that was as astonishing as it was delightful. Pointing out one, a cornet player, he told me that at the

time of the relief a band of Russians entered his house athirst with the fever of looting. He saw his little home on the point of being destroyed. Seized with a sudden impulse he began playing the Russian National Hymn. They stopped thunderstruck and uncovered, then slunk away, and the home of this boy musician was saved.

Society in this new Pekin has undergone changes. There is less of the feeling of being one family with the increase of numbers. It is more split up into cliques and sections. There are any number of dinner parties, but few dances for want of girls, there being only about fifteen dancing women in the whole community, and of these only three are unmarried. With all the officers of the legation guards the supply is woefully unequal to the demand.

It is interesting to watch the soldiers of different nationalities in the samples of them we have here. The Germans, Japanese and French are worked the hardest; one can see them at drill every morning on their parade grounds, and at marching and rifle practices innumerable. Of the three the Germans work the hardest, and their officers unquestionably more so than those of any other nationality. They are nearly all studying Chinese in addition to the hours they spend at the study of their profession. Of the other forces the Americans have probably the easiest time, and none of them trouble their heads about the language or literature of China. The British Tommies go in for games like cricket and football more than any of the others do, while the Germans and Japanese devote a lot of time to the gymnasium. There have been frequent rows when the soldiers were out on leave in the disreputable saloons which beach-combers of various nationalities have established outside the legations, so that leave has now been reduced to two hours at a time. The said saloons and other low dives are about the only things not peaceful in the city. The natives go to bed early, and after about ten o'clock the streets are deserted.

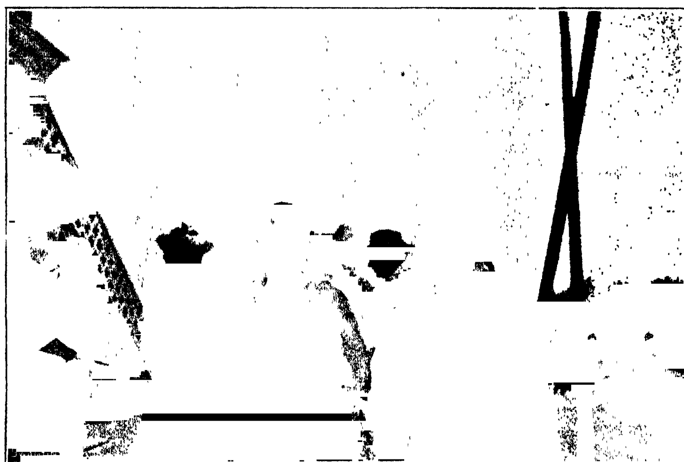
It speaks volumes for the complete pacification of Pekin that the attention of the whole European population for some time before had been concentrated on the race meet-



The Pekin Derby.

ing, which took place while I was there. An excellent course has been laid out, and a stand has been erected by the members of the Pekin club a few miles outside the walls. Special trains were run each day to a station close to the course, which were crowded every day by sportsmen and women of various nationalities. The platform before

the starting of the train had a most cosmopolitan appearance. There were German officers strapped up in their tight uniforms; French cavalry men in their loose, baggy trousers; Russians who, even in the scorching heat, are still attached to their grey overcoats; British Tommies in khaki; and, most picturesque of all, the Chinese gentlemen who were guests of the club. These latter, some of whom drove to the station in European broughams, were



In the Paddock, Pekin Races.

dressed in their native costumes of loose brocaded silk, and one or two were decorated with peacocks' feathers. They have not yet gone quite so far as to wear race glasses slung across their shoulders, but we shall probably see that within a year or two. Many of the race-goers drove out along the road under the shadow of the old city walls, as the distance was only seven miles from the legation quarter. Nearing the course it was evident that the inhabitants took a keen interest in the races. An Eastern addition on a small scale of what may be seen on Epsom Downs was there apparent. Refreshment booths had been erected under canvas canopies,

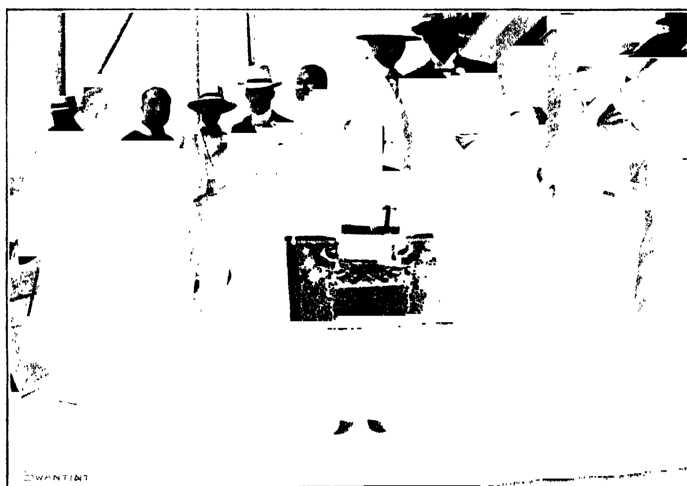
where the noxious-looking viands beloved of Chinese were for sale, and Japanese beer for the Tommies of various nationalities. All the ministers and the members of the different legations were to be seen on the stand, and their diplomatic disputes and rivalries were, for these days at least, laid aside or left only to the representation and performances of their ponies. The greatest number of prizes during the meeting were carried off by British-owned animals, Mr Townley, our *chargé d'affaires*, and Lady



On the Course, Pekin Races.

Susan Townley being particularly successful. The betting was done through a *pari mutuel* conducted by British Tommies, which appealed strongly to the gambling instincts of the Chinese. The mafoos and their friends were regular plungers, and the mafoos' race, which was ridden without whips or spurs, gave rise to much native excitement. There were quite a large number of visitors and native guests; among the former the figure of Lord Lonsdale, familiar to race-goers, was to be seen amid unusual surroundings. An excellent lunch was provided by the club each day. Most of the racing was very good, but there

was a constant element of uncertainty and excitement owing to the behaviour of some of these obstinate and sturdy little ponies. A couple of them, which were considered to have had the best chances, successfully withstood all attempts made by their jockeys to mount them. One of them bolted and disappeared to parts unknown, and was not recaptured until the small hours of the morning. It



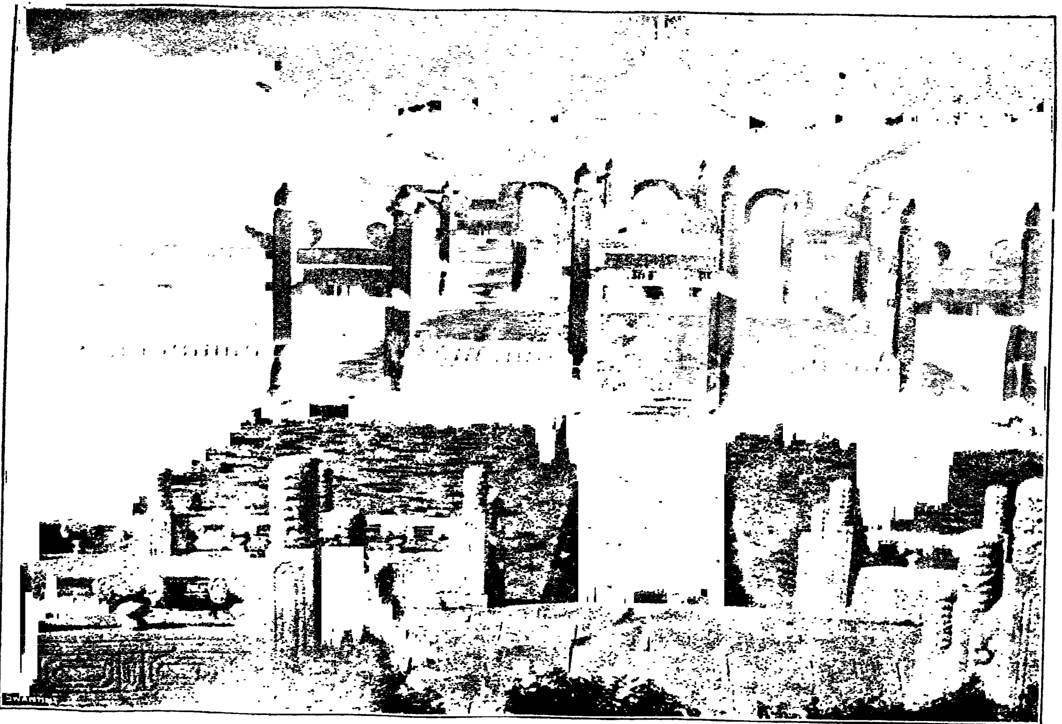
Correct Card of the Races.

was a desperate hand-to-hand struggle to get them to the starting-post, but when set going they raced with a will, as if they loved it. Probably on no racecourse in the world has there ever been seen such a cosmopolitan gathering, amongst the many picturesque features of which was a young Chinese boy selling programmes and pencils. All the arrangements of the meeting were most admirably conducted by the committee, and notwithstanding the rivalry of the various competitors there were no disputes or objections, so that there were no international complications resulting from a very pleasant three days' racing.

For days past Pekin had been asmoke with dust storms such as no other city can equal; dust, hot and gritty, that penetrates everywhere and parches everything. They have been unusually bad this year, which is not surprising as the surrounding country is suffering from a terrible drought, which will become disastrous if it continues. In some districts the land was baked too hard for ploughing, and crops could not be sown, and in others where they have been sown there is no prospect of a harvest. All that rich land from the sea to here is like a sandy desert, faint threadbare lines of green showing the warp and woof where there ought to be a rich plush garment of harvest covering the earth. The half-despairing people pray for the rain that does not come. At the temples special services are held; the new Catholic cathedral has daily a service ending in benediction; the Emperor himself went out to the Temple of Heaven, offered sacrifice, and in night-long vigil prayed for rain; but on his return whirlwinds of dust flounted the silken trappings of his chair, and tossed about the gorgeous umbrellas and bedraggled banners in derision and mockery.

By a merciful dispensation these dust storms generally cease at sundown, and one can walk abroad in comfort. One evening I strolled down Hata Men Street about ten o'clock, past the white marble arch or pai-ho erected on the spot where Von Ketteler was killed. Pekin is not a late city; most of the shops were already closed and that line of other shopkeepers which crowd the side-walks during the daytime had dwindled to an occasional restaurant stall here and there. The great doors of the Hata Men were closed for the night; walking up the sloping road, under the deep shadow of the wall, I reached the top. It was a glorious night with a full moon, and I know of no more interesting walk in the world than along that broad road at the top of the walls. There is something immensely big and impressive in these monolithic battlements that have endured in their grandeur. I recollect taking a child up

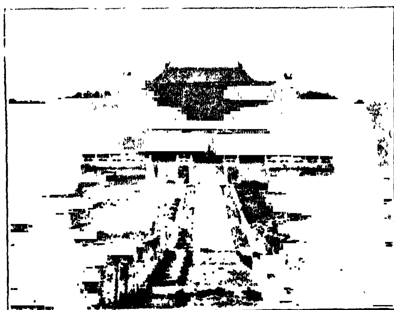
there one evening: "Take me down, please, take me down, I am afraid—it is all so big and so quiet—" and she showed an evident fear that there was no sign of where we were walking to, though the streets were filled with sinister and repellent faces below. No one can be there at such a time without getting some touch of that child's sensation, "so big and so quiet." I have never seen Chinamen walking there, I fancy they are not allowed; and of guards one only sees a few sentries or watchmen hanging around their tent-like huts, or lying asleep inside, so that it looks like an elevated and deserted road running through a crowded city, and not bounding it as there are houses on the outside as well as within. From the moat or succession of pools without, rose the croaking of innumerable frogs, and the dust still held in suspension in the now motionless air, made a nimbus of moonlight on the clumped tops of the trees beyond. I walked towards the eastern gate, whence I had come with the Japanese the night of the relief of the legations; on the left one could see the extensive buildings of the Presbyterian mission in course of erection. The tower at the south-east corner of the wall still shows the marks of the Russian shells; beyond that is a great space covered with bricks, the ruins of cells where the examinations used to be held up to 1900. They were partially ruined by the Boxers, but the greater part of the destruction was done by European soldiers during the occupation, who tore down for firewood the woodwork of the examination rooms, watching towers, and the shrine to Confucius in the grounds. Near by on the wall is a massive stone pedestal on which is another German monument. It is one of broken marble slabs with here and there pieces of carved bronze imbedded in them, showing where the Germans had wrenched away those exquisitely carved astronomical instruments which, poised in delicate massiveness, looked as if the centuries were only days since they left the hands of the workmen



In the Temple of Heaven, Pekin.

who had wrought them. If there had been a paint-pot at hand I would have liked to have put an inscription on that pedestal, which stands as lasting a monument as the pai-ho to Von Ketteler of German vandalism.

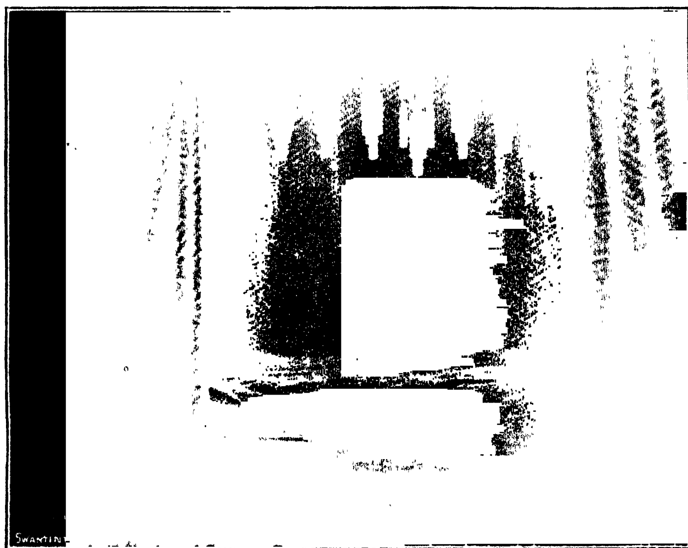
When I had last seen the eastern gatehouse it was a battered and roofless ruin. I was surprised to find in its place a handsome new building with deep red pillars and carved woodwork, the roof and whole outline showing in silhouette a combination of gracefulness and strength which proved that Chinese architects and artists have not lost the feelings which animated their predecessors. This gate was the first to be restored, as through it the Dowager-Empress and Emperor have to pass on their way to the Ming tombs. It was here the Japanese lost two hundred and twenty men, and where they were held at bay from sunrise until the gates were blown up at ten o'clock at night. A few old cannon were still lying about, an old sentinel was smoking, and near by were stretched a couple of his companions, reminding one of the corpses I had seen when last there. All that part of the city seemed wrapped in a slumber the most profound. The distant baying of dogs was heard with an occasional yelp from those who could be seen on the moonlit patches of the streets below moving about with the silence of flitting bats, in search of their noisome food. "Dum, dum-boom—Dum, dum-boom," sounded the drum and gong of the watchmen as they went their rounds.



The Imperial Palace, Pekin.

The most peculiar thing about Pekin is the transformation of its aspect when one looks at it from a height such as

this; below, the streets look squalid and the houses overcrowded together, but in the enclosure of their yards they nearly all have trees growing which are hardly visible from the streets. From above, at some little distance, it looks as if a green carpet had been laid on the house tops right away to where the yellow-tiled roofs of the palace stand out, and the pagoda crowned summit of Coal Hill.



The Emperor's Bed.

In what profound repose the great city lay. Over a million people sleeping within these broad walls under the bright daylight of the moon. I know of no city of its size that sleeps so soundly. Leaning on the parapet of those battlements, one's elbows resting on the same stones that were there before William crossed from Normandy, the scene stretching away below is now no different from what it was then, the voices of the night vibrate similarly through the warm air and the whole life of the people

is just much the same. What possibilities, world-influencing possibilities, lie within these walls, if that city, which the vast empire would surely follow, should really rouse itself from its hibernation of centuries. It is coming this awakening, and coming soon. Returning back through the streets the only sounds came from where garish lights blared from the saloons that surround the legation quarters, and from these other houses where the outcasts of their trade from every country propagate disease and edify the natives among whom they live.

The transformation, the awakening of China will not be done by us Europeans, but by their neighbours the Japanese. There are evidences of it everywhere, but the Japanese work quietly; the proofs of their progress have to be searched for to be found. That the great change will come I believe as firmly as in the coming of to-morrow's day. Now, as I write, it is more than two hours from sunrise; there is as yet no faintest glamour of light, and the mournful, sullen, dum-dum, boom-boom of the night watchman sounds from the dark streets, yet with that sound comes the crowing of the early cocks afar, and these other faint, hardly perceptible noises that in the hushed rumour of their chorus we recognise as the voices of the dawn.

CHAPTER VII

THE JAPANISATION OF CHINA

LESSONS OF THE JOINT-OCCUPATION OF PEKIN, 1900—THE RAPPROCHEMENT SINCE BETWEEN JAPAN AND CHINA—CHINESE STUDENTS COMING TO JAPAN—THE JAPANESE UNIVERSITY IN PEKIN—INCREASE OF JAPANESE TRADE WITH CHINA—MILITARY INSTRUCTORS—REORGANISING THE PEKIN POLICE—JAPANESE DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE—LOSS OF BRITISH PRESTIGE IN THE EAST—WHEN THE DOWAGER-EMPRESS DIES

During the last few weeks the East has been opened to travellers as it has never been before by the new express service on the Trans-Siberian Railway. One can now go from Piccadilly to Pekin in seventeen and a half days, or to Japan within eighteen, and the greater part of the journey with a degree of comfort not to be found in any other long-distance railway journey in the world. There should no longer be that remoteness, that feeling of inaccessibility with which it is habitual to regard the countries of the Orient. As this new railway has made them more neighbourly, so will it quickly have the effect of directing more of the attention of Westerners to the movements in progress there and to events whose significance has hitherto been dwarfed by distance.

While living in Pekin for a couple of months after the occupation of the city by the allies in 1900, there was ample opportunity for comparing the conduct and relations of various nationalities brought into direct and immediate contact with the Chinese. The city was divided into

sections under the control of Americans, British, Japanese, Germans, French and Italians. Going round through the different sections one saw the progress being made in re-settling and governing and restoring order. I was particularly struck at the time, as was every one else, by the way the Japanese managed things in their quarter. Of course they started with considerable advantages. First of all, though the spoken language is different, the written language of the Chinese and Japanese is the same, which gave them a means of communicating which was not possessed by the others. More than that, however, was the kinship in their habits of thought and intellectual and moral attitude. This was not to be wondered at when we bear in mind that besides the written language the Japanese took their religion, their art and most of their old civilisation from China. The results were very striking. The Chinese soon returned to the Japanese quarter, while still fighting shy of returning to the others; order was rapidly established; business recommenced, and in a short time the streets reassumed their normal aspect, while the other parts of the town had a very different appearance. The Germans, for instance, worked very hard in their quarter, but always on lines of military rigidity. They seemed to be aiming at converting their quarter into the likeness of a model German town. They made all sorts of rules and regulations, such as, for instance, that each householder was to keep the street in front of his house clean, and punished the natives for offences that were incomprehensible to them. The effect was that the majority of the natives did not return, and it was little better populated than the Russian or French quarters, each of which was a wilderness of ruined or empty dwellings. I recollect thinking that if the Japanese could exercise their influence so successfully in such a small sphere, what might not their influence effect if they got the opportunity of exercising it on the Chinese on a much larger and wider scale? I

found myself speculating as to what would be the result if Japan should seriously devote herself to influencing China towards following in her own footsteps.

Now, when again visiting China and Japan, where I have spent the past three months, I find convincing and plentiful evidence that such a movement is actually in progress My attention was first called to it by what I saw and heard in Japan. I found that during the last three years a large number of young Chinamen have been coming to Japan to be educated, and what is surprising is that young men of good position, who were wont to look upon the military profession as one unworthy of a gentleman, have been going in large numbers to be educated in the military colleges. Of course for many years back a few Chinese have been educated there, but never in anything like the same numbers as at present. I had an opportunity of speaking to a few of those who are at the military schools. When dressed in the same clothes as their Japanese fellow-students it was impossible to tell they were Chinamen, except that they were taller than the Japanese boys of their age. They were a fine-looking lot of young fellows, and every bit as smart in bearing and appearance as the Japanese. One of them, when I asked why he had come there, explained that he believed China would soon go in for having an army just like the foreign armies, that Chinamen made good soldiers if they could only get good officers, and that they hoped to become officers.

In their commercial relations China and Japan have drawn much closer together; the volume of their trade has increased very considerably during the past three years. Many of the Japanese banks have opened branches in China, and there is a talk of starting a Japanese-Chinese Bank very much on the same lines as the Russo-Chinese Bank. I was at Osaka when a number of prominent Chinese business men came over to visit the exhibition,



In the Forbidden City.

and saw the attention they received from some of the foremost bankers and manufacturers of Japan, a number of whom came down specially from Tokio to entertain them. In dozens of ways I saw signs of this *rapprochement* between the two countries. From the press, and in talking to prominent men, one sees how the idea has taken hold of the Japanese mind that it is the mission of Japan to bring China, as it were, into the sphere of her intellectual, moral and social influence. Both from a commercial and military standpoint they realise how great and important this mission is, and have already set about the task in a manner worthy of its importance. Essentially an imitative people, they have grasped the importance of the part that the Russo-Chinese Bank has been made to play for Russia, how it has been used as a dummy to do all sorts of things for the Russian Government which must not appear in the latter's name. The railway through Manchuria, for instance, was built by the bank, and the bank's officials form a sort of Russian consular service at the places where their numerous branches are established. The manager of the branch in Pekin, Mr Pokotiloff, is rightly regarded as having as much influence as the Ministry. He is, in fact, a Russian financial minister to China.

Even from what I had seen and heard in Japan, I was not prepared for the manifold evidence of the movement in operation that I saw in China. Perhaps the thing that may be pregnant with possibly as important results as any is the establishment of a high school or university in Pekin by the Japanese. They have already a staff of very able professors there, and are sending over more, one of whom was in the steamer with me going over. It is called the Imperial University, but all of the professors are Japanese. There is a nice touch of delicate Eastern cleverness about this. In this branch of the invasion—the intellectual—they would not think of calling it the "Japanese University" in Pekin; no, it is the "Imperial University," and so

successful have they been that early in July, a decree was issued expressing the Imperial approval of it, together with the wish that its influence should be extended and a uniform mode of procedure be adopted throughout the provincial system.

There appears to be a curious amount of mystery about the establishment of this university. It is difficult to get definite information about it. The professor going out with me, whether intentionally or not, gave one the impression of being curiously ignorant of the scope or status of the institution. It is quite probable that there may be very good reason for this, inasmuch as it is probably more or less of an experiment, and will have to be handled with tentative diplomacy, so that its establishment may not antagonise the Chinese, but win their support and approval. There will be no opposition to it on religious grounds, such as attaches to the missionary schools of the various denominations, which never have succeeded in attracting scholars any more than converts, except from the very lowest classes.

The commercial invasion was evidenced by the largely increased number of shops and places of business that have been opened by Japanese in Pekin and other of the large towns. All old residents agree that a much larger number of Japanese are to be met with now travelling about the country than at any time heretofore. In many branches of manufacture their goods have taken the place of British goods—Japanese cottons, Japanese beer and mineral waters in every hotel, Japanese cigarettes in all the roadside stalls, and Japanese imitations of all the well-known proprietary articles, from brandy to bicycles. Painstaking, pushing and polite, they are ideal commercial travellers, and their understanding of their neighbours and customers, the Chinese, makes up to a considerable extent for the inferiority or defects of some of their goods, in comparison with those of their longer-established competitors.

They are quick to adapt themselves to the requirements of the new markets they seek to enter. For instance, in Korea the bales of English cotton the natives were in the habit of buying were too large to be carried by the Korean donkeys. With traditional conservatism of possession the idea of altering the size of the bales would never enter the Englishman's head. The Jap competitor offered bales the size to suit the donkeys. As most of the goods-carrying throughout Korea is done a-donkey back, this is an important consideration; anyhow, the Japanese goods may now be seen all over the country.

In a military direction their influence is no less apparent. The Chinese, up to 1900, had German, English and a few French instructors; these have now been entirely given up, and the instructing of their soldiers, and the reorganisation of their army, as far as outsiders are concerned, has been completely handed over to the Japanese. The previous instructors were, as a rule, capable men for the work, for which they received such very good salaries, but none of them ever appear to have got a grip of those they were supposed to instruct; they never got in touch with their men. It was a perfunctory duty perfunctorily performed. It is not very surprising that these officer mercenaries did not produce better results. They had none of the incentive reasons which inspired the only successful Western commander of Eastern troops—Gordon—when he formed and led his "Ever Victorious Army." Gordon, single-handed, showed what can be done with Chinese troops, but these pipe-clayed, stock-stiff Germans cannot move out of their own barrack-square of thought, and the British who were employed had not sufficient elasticity of intellect to adapt themselves to such a widely separated standpoint of conditions. The heart of Europeans cannot be in such work. Pay alone will not make men keen on a distasteful task. They must always feel that it is more or less treacherous to engage in the manufacture of probable

enemies. With the Japanese it is altogether different. They have the deep-lying feeling of distant kinship. Every man they drill is a potential ally. He is a possible help to the great dam they would throw across Eastern Asia against the advance of Russia. They have the underlying feeling that blood is thicker than water, that the community of colour and race and religion make them natural allies, and the great dream, nebulous and yet unformed to definiteness, is nevertheless in the background of their minds—the dream of an awakened China which, following in their footsteps, shall unite with them in declaring a Monroe Doctrine for the East, and with the power to make pronouncement good, shall tell the Westerners that they must go no further—that China must remain indivisibly and for ever for the Chinese, as Japan for themselves. As a slight change of costume makes them almost indistinguishably Chinese, so it is for them but a natural easy transition to adapt themselves to the idiosyncrasies of those they have taken in hand, make concessions and meet their prejudices in unimportant matters for the better exercise of their influence in more important. I am one of those, perhaps in the minority, who believe in religion being an important element in the making of good soldiers. I have heard the Boers singing in their laagers outside Ladysmith, and seen the Russians bend devoutly for blessing before going into battle, and Indian cavalrymen lay their mats on the mud of the banks of the Pei-ho, and turn Mecca-wards to say their prayers at sunset, and I have seen Irish soldiers seek their army chaplain on the eve of a fight, and fight all the better for it on the morrow. Probably as little evidences of genuine religion are to be seen about the Japanese as about any people; their religious attitude has been delightfully described as one of "politeness towards possibilities." That may be correct for the higher classes, but these no more represent all Japan than Paris represents the peasantry of France.

Campaigning with them in China, I remember well that every evening as the time came for turning in, either under our tiny shelter tents or only our blankets beneath the higher canopy, there was always to be seen a ring of men tramping around with some non-commissioned officer generally in the centre, chanting their Buddhist hymns. The quaint rhythm of the tune comes back with the memory of those warm nights after sultry days of sweaty marching in parching heat. It is not a small thing towards the making of an army that the religious faith of the common soldiers should be the same as that of their commanders and instructors, as is the case with the new tutors of the Chinese.

There are seventy Japanese officers employed in the reorganisation of the Chinese army. That there are at least this number I have been able to satisfy myself on most reliable authority, but I do not know how many more or how many times as many, there may possibly be, as both the Chinese and the Japanese are most reticent on the subject.

It is more than probable that there is a very much larger number, but with people who are so accustomed to "ways that are dark," and with such complete facilities for keeping their proceedings secret, it would be next to impossible to ascertain how many there are when it is obviously so desirable from the point of view, both of the Japs and Chinese, to prevent such information getting abroad. I met one of the officers thus engaged, who had been up on the expedition to the relief of the legations in 1900, and with some little difficulty got him to speak of the capabilities of the Chinese for being made into good soldiers. In his Chinese uniform I would never have recognised him as a Japanese. According to him, they possess many of the essentials that go to the making up of what he called "war soldiers." They possess great endurance and physical stamina, and can stand extremes of heat and cold. They

can work on simple rations, of practically rice alone. They learn to handle their weapons quickly and with dexterity, and, with a little practice, become excellent marksmen. They are obedient, and their discipline is excellent when they have capable officers over them who are at all in earnest about their work, and he thought would show bravery and devotion in following such. On the other hand, they lacked the patriotism of the Japanese soldier, and his innate and hereditary love of fighting almost for fighting's sake. He thought this would be made up for to a great extent, if the Chinese soldiers were only regularly paid, and laid great stress on the bad effect it has always on them, of being irregularly and intermittently paid, and sometimes for periods receiving nothing at all. This being changed, as he led me to understand was the case, he considered they would be first-class "war soldiers." The centres of this military activity and reformation are none of them near Pekin. The Chinese have no love for foreign military *attachés*. The nearest large military station is at Pao-ting-Fu. At the time of the recent visit there of the Emperor and Empress-Dowager, when some of the foreigners inquired about the military review, they were assured that there was to be no such thing; but it took place all the same.

The Korean army has already been reorganised to a certain extent by the Japanese on the model of their own, and the Koreans have copied the Japs even to the details of uniform. The Russians at present are doing just the same in Northern Manchuria as the Japanese are doing in China proper. They are training and drilling troops who are officered by Russians, who, as they wear the Chinese uniform, are not readily distinguishable except by the omniscient agents of the Japanese Intelligence Department. From what I could make out, they have close on 10,000 men already so trained. The Japanese papers say that the number is considerably larger, and that they aim

at having an army of 50,000 Russian-trained Chinese soldiers there, but this, I think, may be taken as a mere newspaper rumour.

The Pekin police force has been reorganised by Japanese, and, I understand, with the most satisfactory results.

One would think that the idea of a Chinese navy had been for ever sunk at the mouth of the Yalu. Yet it does



Chinese Police in Pekin.

not appear to be so. Three gunboats were ordered last month (July), and, under the advice of Chang-Chih-Tung, they were ordered to be built by the Japanese, so it will not be surprising if we find the influence they have exercised over the army, the police and university education, next extended to what remains of the Chinese navy. It is well known in China that the arsenals are again busy, particularly in the South, and that quantities of arms are being quietly imported, principally from Japan. Most of all in the diplomatic sphere is their growing influence increasingly felt, and not the less so on account of the

almost intangible subtlety of its pressure. Throughout this quiet invasion of China by them, there is little to attract attention or arouse suspicion or alarm; everything is done unobtrusively, and there is no jubilation over their progressive steps towards achievement. Their diplomatic struggle with Russia, through the Chinese, is not the less important from the deadly earnestness of its silence. That they know how to work quietly is shown by their marvellous military Intelligence Department, probably the best in the world. All over China, Korea, Manchuria and Siberia their spies are at work. The Russian general at New-chwang says he is perpetually shadowed by them wherever he goes. I got my hair cut there a short time ago by a polite but woefully incompetent barber, whom the Russians told me afterwards was a Japanese officer, but a Japanese friend subsequently, while denying his rank, admitted that he was a spy. Before I left Japan, the Intelligence Department had just completed the compiling of an immense and elaborate map of Manchuria, as a necessary part for these preparations for the great struggle which, in the back of the Japanese mind, is regarded as sooner or later inevitable.

In contrast to the increasing diplomatic influence of the Japanese in Pekin is the loss of British prestige there. From a plain business standpoint nothing can be more humiliating than the diplomatic conduct of British affairs in the Far East during the last few years. Our position has been a shifting one from the front rank to taking what may well be called "a back seat." It seems rather unfortunate that when such a keen struggle is in progress we should be represented by such a lot of delightfully charming invertebrates as we have selected to represent us. The slaps in the face of lost battles following in quick succession arouse the British public to inquire into the methods of the War Office. But how about their Foreign Office? There is a mystery and sanctity about the diplomatic service that

hides its members from criticism as much as it protects them from inquiry or reprimand. The red tape that has mummified the War Office is nothing to that which wraps up our Foreign Office. The men who represent Russia, on the contrary, are strong, vigorous men of affairs, business men who will not be denied in pushing the business of the great firm they represent. That we have in Sir Ernest Satow one of the most distinguished oriental scholars living, and in Mr Townley a most excellent judge of a Chinese pony, is all very well, but instead of savants or English squires we want representatives with some of the instincts of enterprising and vigorous men of business. It seems almost incredible the neglect of opportunities for developing business we show in the Far East. I have already alluded to the way the Americans and Germans have got ahead of us in supplying machinery and materials required for the construction of the railway, and as regards the markets opened by it, British trade with Russia is decreasing, while German trade with her is on the increase. Why have we not a consul at Dalny, the terminus of 1700 miles of railway? The United States has one. Why have we not a commercial agent at Vladivostok as well as Belgium has? An Englishman is not allowed to buy a town lot or open a shop in Harbin, the most important city in the centre of Manchuria, yet German influence was strong enough to enable Messrs Kunst & Albers of Hamburg to open a branch establishment there.

I know of no movement more pregnant with world-influencing possibilities than this now in progress which makes towards the Japanisation of China. I have alluded only to a few of the signs of it, which I might easily multiply. There will be great changes in the government and life of that vast empire just as soon as the Empress-Dowager dies, and she is now an old woman. In the upheaval of change, if the industrious, persistent, far-sighted efforts of her neighbours bear fruit, we may

witness quite a rapid transformation in the life of the empire. That clever conspirator, Sen Yat Sen, said to me that once the Chinese made up their minds to change, they would effect in fifteen years as much as it has taken Japan thirty to accomplish. There are some men in the East who affect to regard this *rapprochement* between Japan and China with alarm, as carrying in its development the menace of a really genuine Yellow Peril. A member of one of the legations in Pekin was emphatic that before long England would have cause to regret having entered into an alliance with Japan, but I could not help thinking that there was a touch of jealousy about this, and that the country he was the representative of would only have been too pleased to have taken our place. Time alone will show how this Japanese movement of quiet invasion of China progresses and if I have exaggerated its significance and importance. If it develops as I expect it will, it will have the effect of stopping the advance of the Russians before they reach Pekin, which, judging by their present rate of progress, might be expected to be their ultimate goal.

They may well rest content with their diplomatic triumph, the annexation of Manchuria; and judging by the way they are closing the door there against the commerce of the rest of the world (for it remains to be seen what the promises are worth of opening ports given in response to the strenuous importunity of Mr Hay) it will be well if they are halted at its frontiers by the Japanisation of China.

CHAPTER VIII

JOURNEY FROM PEKIN TO NEW-CHWANG

START FROM PEKIN — FOURTH-CLASS SARDINE BOXES — A CURIOUS GOLDFIELD — A BATTLEFIELD — A THIRSTY TRACT — A NIGHT NEAR THE GREAT WALL—A GORGEOUS TOUTAI AND HIS WIVES—DELICIOUS PRAWNS—RUSSIANS IN NEW-CHWANG — "ÉVACUATION POUR RIRE" — THE COURTESY OF RUSSIAN OFFICIALS — WE JOIN THE MAIN LINE

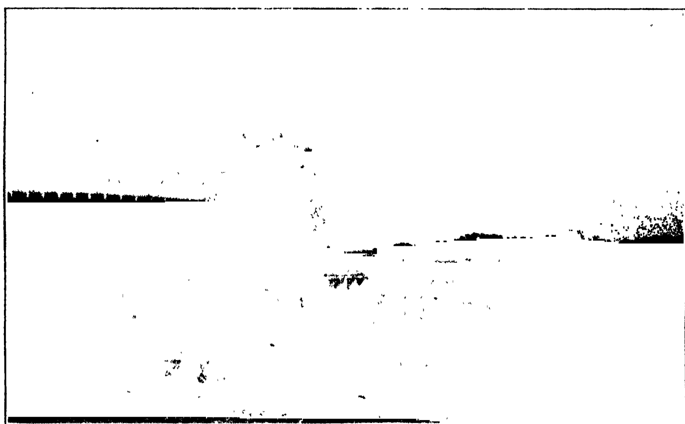
IT was a bright clear morning promising a hot day when we left Pekin at seven o'clock on the long railway journey



Fourth-Class Passengers in China.

that was to end at Calais. The first-class railway carriages were fairly filled and there was a dining-car on the train, the greater part of which was made up of open trucks

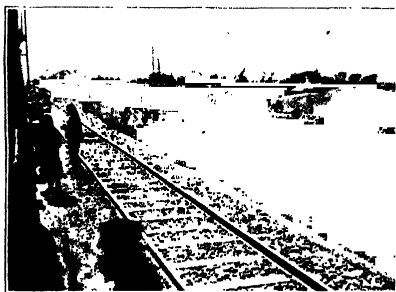
simply packed with Chinese, and many travelled wherever they could find room on barrels or cases in the freight cars. However the Chinese may object to the construction of railways they most certainly are good patrons of the lines that have been constructed. The fares are very low in these open trucks, and they are packed literally as close as they can be squeezed into them. There is a part of the railway line close under



A curious Goldfield.

the city wall which for some months past presents the spectacle of what may be perhaps considered the most extraordinary goldfield on earth. In the soil and gravel used for ballasting the line very minute particles of gold were found, and since then all day long numbers of the poorest of the population, principally old men and women, can be seen turning over the earth and gravel with their hands. They are not allowed to use water or they would probably soon wash the line away, so have to be content with the machinery of their fingers. They moved as the train passed and were squatting on the sleepers again at their work before it was out of sight.

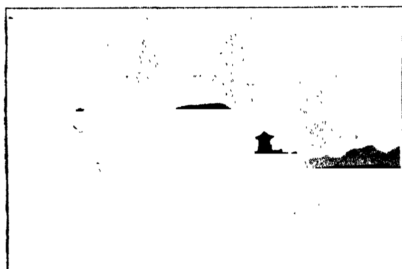
All the country from Pekin to Tientsin and beyond gave evidence of the terrible drought from which the land was suffering. What ought to have been at this time a rich tract of country covered with waving crops was nothing but a dusty desert. Here and there one could see faint lines where the crops had just shown above the ground but had not grown more than a couple of inches. The train, although called an express, went very slowly and stopped at many stations. Of course there are no refreshment buffets at them, but their place is taken by a crowd of natives offering pears, radishes, Japanese beer and a variety of evil-looking cakes for sale. Yangtsun was the first place I recognised from the time I traversed this route with the forces that relieved the legations. There the Chinese had destroyed the iron bridge that spans the river and made a stand behind the high embankment. It was practically the only engagement of any seriousness during the whole march to Pekin. Tientsin platform was a veritable pandemonium of yelling natives as they struggled to get themselves and their belongings on or off the train. From that on, the country was flat and uninteresting in the extreme. All this dead level plain, flat as the sea, which it borders and merges into in tracts of slob, is the result of the deposit of the river Peiho which, like all the rivers of China, carries down the loess in suspension, with which deposit the whole of Northern China is covered. For miles out, the yellow colour of the river water tinges the sea, to which it gives the name, so that there is a sharply marked line; on one side, water of Mediterranean



The Battlefield of Yangtsun.

translucence, on the other, a liquid rather resembling pea-soup.

This deposit is gradually extending the land seawards. Tientsin, for instance, two hundred years before Christ, was a seaport town, now there is over thirty miles of this land formed by sedimentary deposit separating it from the sea. All the way to near Shan-hai-Kwan the heat was intense and the dust simply infernal. For the last hour of the journey the scenery was picturesque and interesting, and we arrived punctually at six o'clock. There was time before dinner to have a look at the Great Wall of China, which here comes down to the sea. There is a brick facing of about three feet on the outer side, and within a great bank of sloping earth flattened on the top. Shan-hai-Kwan is a walled city, one side of which forms part of the Great Wall, which extends to the sea on the west and can be traced right up the mountains towards the north-east, its course marked by the towers on their summits. An excellent little hotel has just been opened close to the railway station, so that it is no longer necessary to sleep in the train as heretofore. The native city with its high walls, towers and gate-houses is characteristic and picturesque with the mountains rising behind it. The military settlements are on the east side of the railway, and soldiers of the various nationalities are to be seen in all directions about the streets. We woke to find it raining and blowing hard and quite cold. We had to change trains, and the one we changed into was distinctly inferior to that of the previous day—the carriages were divided



The Great Wall.

into *coupés* with a saloon at each end, and unlighted stoves that might with advantage have been kindled; the rain leaked from the roof and the wooden seats were hard and uncomfortable. The open trucks were just as full of natives as on the day before, and a miserable crew they looked with their padded blue clothes soaked with rain, some had umbrellas but the storm was too fierce to make them of



The Great Wall of China at Shan-hai-Kwan.

much use. The thirsty ground seemed to drink in the grateful rain: one could not see a pool although it was coming down in torrents. There was no dining-car on the train to-day and the most the Chinese attendant could do for us was to supply us with hot water boiled in a peculiar kettle, a sort of portable stove with a funnel for charcoal down the centre of it. About eleven o'clock we had got through the storm, the sun shone out and with a complete absence of dust things generally became more comfortable. At a sea-side station the train was besieged by a number of natives offering for sale boiled crabs and prawns which were a

welcome addition to the lunch we had brought with us. I bought two magnificent crabs for ten sen and three prawns about the size of small lobsters for five sen.



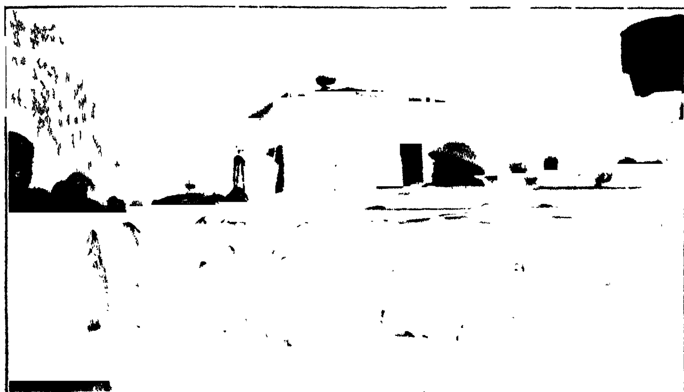
Chinese selling Crabs and Prawns.



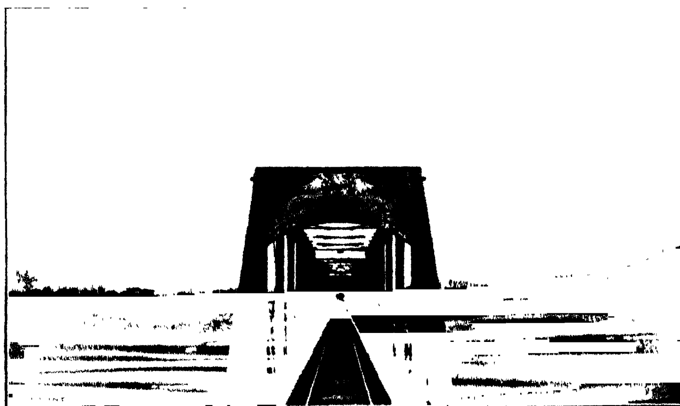
Mandarins giving the Toutai a "send off."

A few stations farther on there was a great commotion and movement on the platform, lines of Chinese soldiers were drawn up with large flags and long trumpets. They were armed with old-pattern rifles and were anything but a

smart or military-looking lot There were a number of mandarins gathered round the waiting-room and a large number



The Toutai's Wives



Bridge on the way to New Chwang

of attendants. Presently a man with a wrinkled face and grey moustache with the decoration of the red button and peacock's feather came out He was followed by three richly dressed and highly painted Chinese ladies, who took

their places in scarlet draped chairs and were carried in them across the platform to a reserved *coupé*; they were followed by maids carrying two little children. We discovered he was Li, the Toutai of New-chwang, and we were told he was about to take over the town when it would be evacuated by the Russians. The train left with a great blowing of trumpets, all the men saluting by ducking down. At every station we passed there was a similar guard and a like

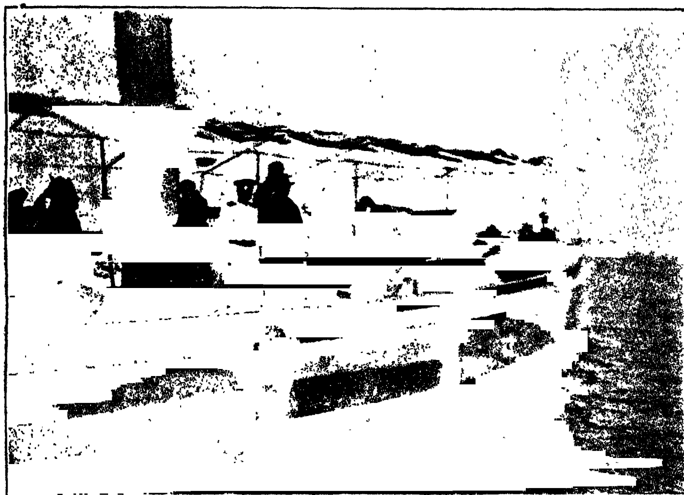


No sign of Evacuation about this.

musical demonstration. On making his acquaintance I found him a courteous and friendly old gentleman. The three ladies were his wives, and it was curious to notice how he sent for them to come to his saloon one at a time. He sent for his baby son first of all, a talkative and precocious mite, who, on a short acquaintance, began a thorough examination of the contents of my pockets.

The whole of this line from Pekin to New-chwang is quite the reverse of being a commercial success. It would take 110,000 taels to pay the interest on the preference shares alone, and last year it only succeeded in showing a profit of 90,000 taels. As a branch line of the Chinese

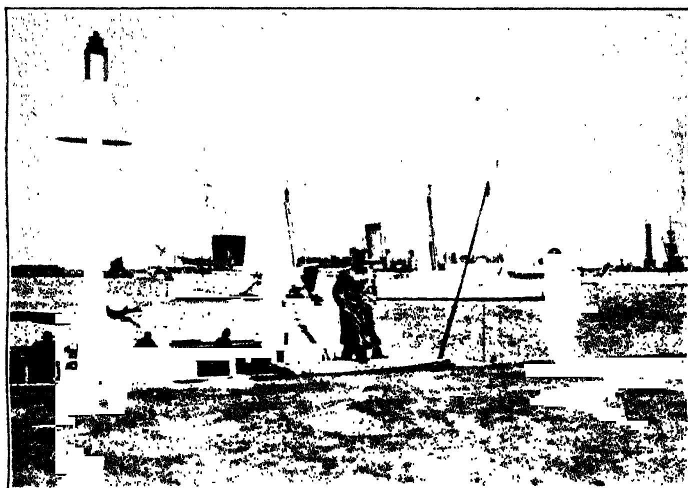
Eastern Railway and the great Siberian system, it could probably be worked more successfully as an important feeder to the latter, and the Russians have their eye on it with a view to this end. At the time that I am writing I just learn that the Chinese and British directors are meeting at New-chwang, and I will not be surprised to hear shortly that the Chinese Eastern Railway, the Russo-



The Toutai's Launch.

Chinese Bank or the Russian viceroy's Government (for any of these names mean exactly the same thing) will have some proposition to make for its acquisition. Until the line between Pekin and Kalgan is made to join that which the Russians have constructed across Mongolia, which is likely to be blocked for some time to come through British opposition, this will remain the sole railway route between Pekin and Europe. The gauge is narrower than that on the Trans-Siberian system, but that is unimportant, as the goods and passengers coming by it must be ferried across the river at New-chwang.

Arriving at the terminus we had to cross the river below the city to get to the hotel. A steam launch just about to start was waiting opposite the station, and we got across in about fifteen minutes. It was a Russian launch; most things in sight were in fact apparently Russian. An astonishing number of junks lined the banks on each side, their masts looking literally like sedge growing on the flat shore. The hotel is quite comfortable, with as



The Bund at New-Chang.

good food as one generally gets in hotels in the East. There is the New-chwang Club behind it, where the visitor will not be long amongst its hospitable members before he will hear from the British portion some hard things said of how their interests are being neglected at home. The doings of the Russians, who are personally popular, though collectively the reverse, is the constant topic of conversation, and there is considerable apprehension amongst the merchants of New-chwang that measures will be taken to encourage and develop the trade of Dalny

at the expense of their own. Russian sentries are posted along the Bund, one right in front of the hotel, and the Russian general has his headquarters in what was a Chinese temple close by. It is a fascinating sight to watch the immense fleet of junks from the Bund beating up against a strong breeze, with their gigantic brown sails, and handled with such skill despite their clumsy appearance, while the great yellow tide sweeps by with the velocity of a mill race.



A Street in New-Chwang.

There was a nasty bit of the journey awaiting us in the morning. The train to take us to Tachechow left from a station, Inkou, three miles away, at 5.40 A.M. The road is very bad, so it would be both slow and uncomfortable to make the journey in a cart. The difficulty was got over by the Russian general, Kondratowitch, very kindly placing a steam launch at our disposal. Fortunately, the morning was fine, otherwise the walk from where the launch stopped to the platform from which the goods train, only intended for carrying railway material from the steamers with a passenger carriage attached, was to start for Tachechow. There were plenty of coolies to carry our

baggage to the train. It was certainly not an inviting scene, and there was little to cheer one at the beginning of the long journey that was before us. A bleak, dead-level plain stretched around; there was a solidly built station-house absolutely deserted, and lines and lines of railway trucks beyond. After a while a young Russian girl with a brown



Russian Cavalry at New-Chwang.

shawl over her head appeared, accompanied by a Chinaman, opened the ticket office, and sold us our tickets as far as Manchuria. The fares are 94 roubles first-class, and 57·75 roubles second. General Kondratowitch invited us to use the official car furnished with comfortable arm-chairs, and in less than an hour we were waiting at the station of Tachechow for the arrival of the express. This was our first glimpse of the main line, and we watched with some impatience and curiosity to see what the train that was to be our moving hotel for so many days would be like.

The line is a broad gauge, five feet. The station-houses are solidly, almost massively, built of brick with limestone facings. There are platforms one foot high, a compromise between the English high ones and the American style, where one has to step up from the level of the ground. Here one saw what was to become so familiar within the next few days—the houses for the forces guarding the railway either completed or in course of erection, and the dwellings for officials in the same condition. They are all being built in the same solid style, good to last for a couple of hundred years. Here again Mr Witte's saying occurs to one, and you can see this motto cut in the stone deep-foundationed all the way from Dalny to Moscow.

The train was one that left Dalny at 11 P.M. on Saturday, and it came into the station only five minutes behind time at 7.30 on Sunday morning. It turned out to be carrying more passengers than any train that had run this year, and we were fortunate in finding room at all; as matter of fact we got the last vacant *coupé* in the train. One ought to telegraph from Pekin to Dalny to engage places, otherwise one runs the risk of not finding room at Tachechow.

CHAPTER IX

THROUGH MANCHURIA

FORTIFIED STATIONS—THE RAILWAY GUARDS—A LUXURIANT COUNTRY—STEEPLECHASING COSSACKS—MUKDEN—TOWN PLANTING—BUSY HARBIN—GAMBLING IN TOWN SITES—FLOUR MILLS COINING MONEY—NO ENGLISH NEED APPLY—LUXURIOUS PRAIRIE LAND—NOMAD CATTLE DROVES

THE early part of the journey through Manchuria is not particularly picturesque or interesting. The line goes along



At a Country Station.

through undulating plains watered by many streams, and here and there an insignificant hill. The villages and towns are thoroughly Chinese, but in the immediate foreground there are always the substantial buildings being erected by the Russians, and close to the railway the

settlers, which the Russians have taken such trouble to bring into the country and establish there, may frequently be seen. It is estimated that, in addition to the railway guards and officials, they will have imported 100,000 settlers, from Russia and Siberia, up to this autumn. The one big thing remarkable about the country as far up as Harbin, and some distance beyond, is that as far as the eye can reach on each side of the road, every acre, every



Building is seen in progress at every Station.

square yard is cultivated. Of course there are no fences, only the little stones, as in China, which mark the corners of boundary limits. The cereals grown in these fields are wheat, barley, oats, millet and buck-wheat. In the south they were growing a good deal of rice, and amongst the forms of barley is the Chinese gao-lin, from which vodka is made. There were great fields of poppies for the making of opium, and many tobacco plantations. In the south, and in the south only, cotton is grown. It is a magnificent wheat country, and when the freights are

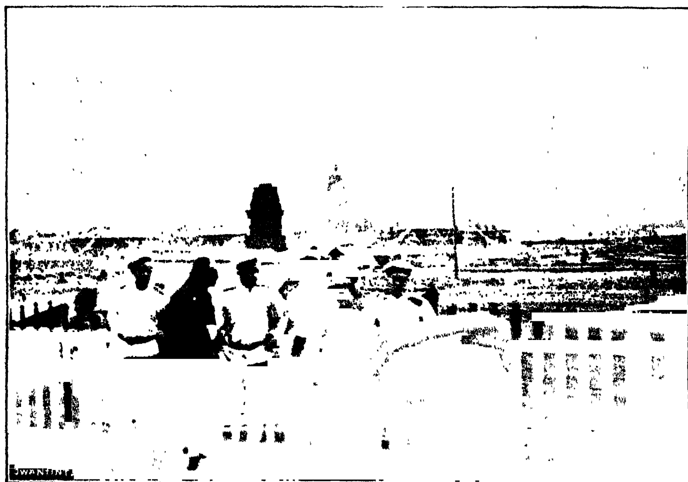
lowered on the railway, Manchurian wheat ought to be able to compete successfully at the Pacific ports. At frequent intervals one passed the Chinese orchards and kitchen gardens, carefully tended and irrigated to a degree not seen in any other part of the world outside China. There, in the little squares of the gardens, were to be seen a profusion of onions, pepper, garlic, and in the orchards, plums, peaches and the hard and rather tasteless Chinese



Cossacks Drilling.

pears. In the south I noticed a few vineyards, but not many. All this tillage was carried on with the most primitive implements—wooden ploughs and harrows—and not a windmill or pump, or a modern threshing or reaping machine to be seen anywhere. The military police were very much in evidence at the railway stations, and appeared to have strict orders to look after anybody carrying a camera. At stations where a stop of half or three-quarters of an hour gave one time for a walk, if I carried my camera I was always followed at a short distance by a soldier, who, the moment I opened it and showed signs

of taking a photograph, would immediately pounce on me and say that it was not allowed. They seem particularly careful that photographs should not be taken of the barracks which were being built at intervals along the line. One day near one of these I saw a lot of Cossacks going through a sort of cross-country drill. There were a couple of pretty stiff fences put up. Two by two the



The Police object to my photographing at the Stations.

men left the ranks and jumped them, and then the whole squadron would jump them together. The Cossack ponies are small, but extremely hardy little animals, and if there should be a conflict between Russia and Japan, the superiority of the Russian cavalry will be the most severe handicap the Japanese will have.

On the afternoon of the first day of the journey, Mukden, the capital of Manchuria, is reached; at least there is a station of that name, but the town itself is a couple of miles away. Now that Mukden has been opened to foreign trade it will be more than ever interesting as a

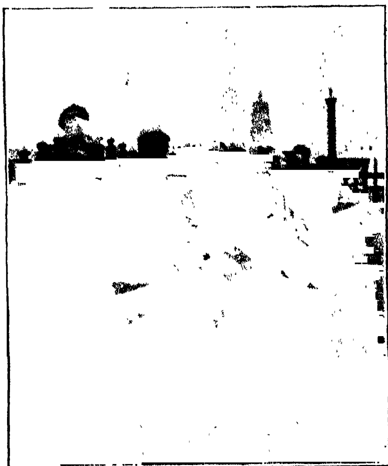
place to stop at on the way. It is situated in the middle of a great alluvial plain, dotted with many villages of the typical Chinese pattern, with a screen of trees around them. The soil is most luxuriant and highly cultivated. Mukden is supposed to have a population of 260,000 inhabitants, with a large proportion of officials, retired and expectant mandarins, who live in magnificent houses and make a great



Cossack Cavalry in Manchuria.

display in the streets with their long retinues of servants mounted on superb mules. Sometimes six outriders in their round, white hats with red tassels will be seen going in advance of one of these swells. The women here do not bind their feet, and have a splendid upright carriage. Their hair is drawn over one of those silver or gold bands about the size of a paper-knife which is placed on the back of their heads and usually decorated with artificial flowers. The streets are wider and cleaner than those of Pekin, and the whole town has the appearance of being in a most

prosperous and flourishing condition. The inner wall is over three miles long, faced with brick, and has high towers on the gates and angles. Mukden is probably the greatest market for furs in the world, and attracts buyers from all parts of China. Even making allowance for the extra price put on for strangers, furs can be purchased very cheaply here. In the centre of the town is a handsome imperial palace, with yellow-tiled roof similar to that at Pekin. The natives of Mukden have taken more kindly to Christianity than those of almost any other city in China. There is a fine mission hospital, which is well equipped, and a medical and surgical school, where young Manchus get a four years' course of training. Some of the mandarins contribute liberally to this institution, and it is a feature that is hardly appreciated by foreigners how generous some of these Chinese merchants and mandarins are. If they do squeeze large sums they are, on the other hand, liberal in their donations to innumerable charities. The pawnshops are the most imposing-looking commercial establishments in the city, and to a great extent take the place of our banks. The rate of interest is fixed by the government, and is not high. The proprietors make their profit principally by the sale of unredeemed goods. If an article is not redeemed within two years it becomes the property of the pawnbroker. When Pekin and Tongchou were looted by the allied



Natives of Mukden.

troops the pawnshops were the richest finds. It was from them that most of the sable cloaks and jade ornaments came. There is a large military establishment near Mukden, which would command the town as completely as if the troops were actually in occupation inside the walls. If the Russians are not satisfied with this, all that they would have to do under the present arrangement would be to build a short branch line into the town, which would need, of course, to have its railway guards the same as the rest of the system. With the present state of things it seems hardly necessary to go to that trouble there or elsewhere. This Eastern Chinese Railway runs close to all the principal cities, and completely commands all the main roads through the country. Then it must be borne in mind that since 1900 the Russians are exercising a careful supervision over all the arms that are allowed into the possession of the Chinese. Every rifle is numbered, the supply of ammunition is carefully limited, and the rifles are all old patterns, except those given to the Chinese who are being trained and officered by the Russians themselves. It was impossible to get accurate information as to how many troops were being trained in this manner. From what I could gather, they appear to have already at least 10,000, but the number may probably be considerably larger. As the soldiers receive their pay regularly from the Russians it must be rather a novel experience for them, and will probably be sufficient in itself to attract a plentiful supply of recruits. There is not sufficient patriotism about the Chinese to make them object to serving under a foreign Power.

Tieline, two stations beyond Mukden, a picturesque place surrounded by hills, is one of the places which will before long become quite an important town. The Russians have gone about making it so with their usual thoroughness. A fine church, with green cupola and golden cross, is already completed, around which lines of stone and timber

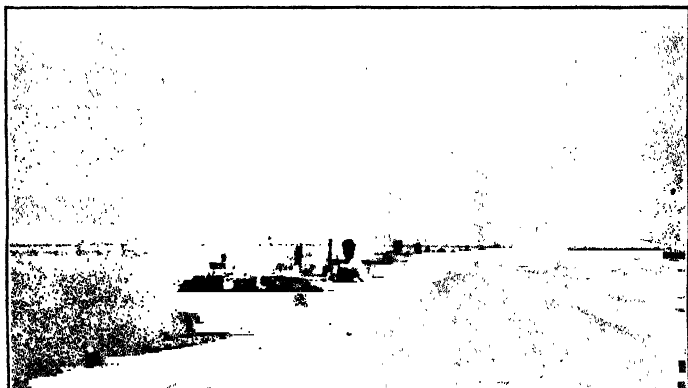
buildings are springing up. The usual barracks, of course, are finished, but the buildings already erected were not all occupied, and seemed to be merely prepared for a population that was yet to come. At this, as well as every other railway station along the line, a garden is laid out beside the platform, fenced round and planted with young trees. In some there is a fountain in the centre and beds of flowers surrounding it. These railway-station gardens are to be found



The Station at Harbin

in all the principal lines through Russia, and the fountains and rich grass and flowers under the shade of the trees have a cool and refreshing effect when one looks out of the windows of a hot and dusty railway carriage. There are seats and summer-houses in many of them. Those that are being planted in Siberia will answer the purpose of a park or recreation ground, for one of the principal events of the day to the inhabitants is the passing of the express train. A curious lot of people are to be seen assembled at these stations—wild-looking Buriats, Moguls of various

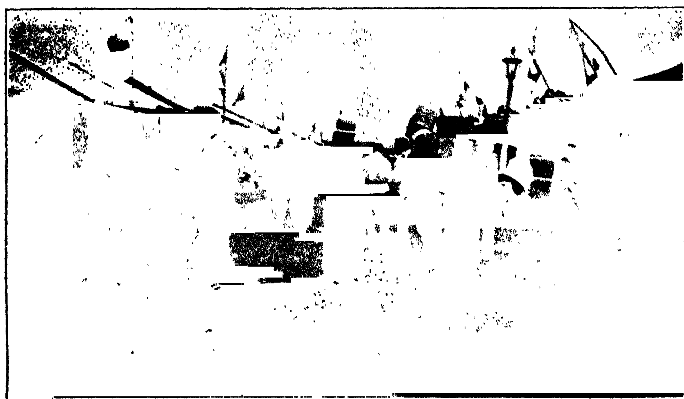
types on Mongolian ponies come down to stare at the express and its passengers, as if it were a travelling menagerie. On the afternoon of the second day Harbin is reached, and to the passengers going through there is a couple of hours' wait, but it is well worth stopping at, if one has the time to spare and is interested in seeing what Russian energy and enterprise can accomplish in a



The Bund at Harbin.

short time. Approaching Harbin there are increasing signs of luxuriant husbandry and a denser population. At the railway cuttings one can see that the black soil is from six feet to eight feet thick, so that one is not surprised at seeing the swathes of rich harvest that cover its surface. When the train drew up at the station there was a scene of bustle and activity that one was quite unprepared for. The scene around the station surpassed anything even in Port Arthur. The waiting-rooms were thronged with people, evidently encamped there in the

usual way the Russians have of waiting for their trains: a crowd of droski men clamoured for custom outside; there was tumult in the crowded refreshment-room, and the whole scene was anything but what one would expect to find in Manchuria. There was an old town of Harbin, but this only exists as a dilapidated suburb to the westward of the new town. The present city is the growth of three years. It has a large public garden, a theatre, a kiosk, a meteoro-



A Street in Harbin.

logical observatory, a cathedral, and a big building for the officers of the Russo-Chinese Bank, the institution which was the immediate means of bringing the town into existence. Here, in New Harbin, is the headquarters of the railway staff, with the enormous station buildings, and workshops and engine-sheds, capable of accommodating an immense number of locomotives. Along the Bund, factories are springing up, and four flour-mills fitted with American machinery are working to their full capacity. They are ideally situated for production and distribution, being close to railway and river. This latter route is considerably cheaper for goods traffic, as the rates on the

railway are up to the present prohibitively high. The whole town is lighted by electricity, and tramways are in course of construction. It is curious to notice the cosmopolitan population Harbin has attracted from all directions. Many Russians have come there from Vladivoski, and numbers of agents for American machinery firms, but practically no English. There has been a gamble in town sites of the most lively character for the last year, and large fortunes have been made by enterprising Russians. Plots of ground are now fetching prices which one might consider absurd if one did not bear in mind the immense possibilities of the place. It is surrounded by a vast tract of extremely rich country, fit to grow anything, but is now principally devoted to wheat growing. The river gives cheap and easy communication throughout the best parts of the country. There is an immense supply of all sorts of raw material to be manufactured in Harbin and then distributed. The Germans have managed to do business there, and Messrs Kunst & Albers of Hamburg have a large and flourishing establishment. A few Americans have managed to squeeze in, but the British seem to be rigidly excluded. An Englishman would not be allowed to buy a town site, or even to open a shop there. The same restless and strenuous activity, developed even to a greater degree, is to be seen here as at Dalny and Port Arthur. A big hotel has just been completed with four hundred rooms, and it was so crowded that not a bed was to be had. Not content with the large garrison which was at Harbin, accommodation for a greatly increased number was being provided, and as it is the centre, or shortly will be, of commercial activity in Manchuria, so also do they evidently mean it to be the military headquarters.

Leaving Harbin the line crosses the Sungari River by an immense bridge, and for some hours goes through level plains of rich cultivation similar to those south of the town.

Then gradually the cultivated portion gives place to patches of prairie, and the prairie increases until it is only patches of cultivation, and in the evening one is going through an expanse of luxuriant grassland, over which roam immense herds of cattle attended by the aborigines on their diminutive ponies.

CHAPTER X

THE IMPORTANCE OF MANCHURIA

THE IMMIGRANTS—KOREANS AND JAPANESE—HOW RUSSIA LAID HANDS ON MANCHURIA—"IN WAR, BURN AND DESTROY"—CHANGE OF ATTITUDE TO THE NATIVES—HOW THE BEAR'S PAW CAN CARESS—THE OSTRICHES OF OUR FOREIGN OFFICE—KNOCKING AT THE CLOSED DOOR—THE COAL- AND GOLDFIELDS OF MANCHURIA

WE do not readily realise at home what Manchuria means and how important a tract of country it is in this fast crowding world. Its area is over 280,000 square miles, more than fives times the size of England and twice the size of Japan. Three provinces of China are comprised in this territory—at least they are still called provinces of China, although practically and to all intents and purposes they are Russian. The most southern of them, Feng-Tien, is the most important and has a population of twelve millions. Mukden is the capital: this is the ancestral home of the present Manchu dynasty. Kerin, the eastern province which borders on Korea, has a population of seven millions, and Hai-Lung-Kiang about two millions; this is the estimated native population, but the numbers are being increased from four sources: first of all by the Russians with the growing numbers of their so-called railway guards, their numerous officials, railway and other, and the stream of immigrants that are coming in from Russia. A considerable number of Koreans are also coming across the border into the province of Kerin and settling there. A Russian estimate puts the number of Koreans at 100,000.

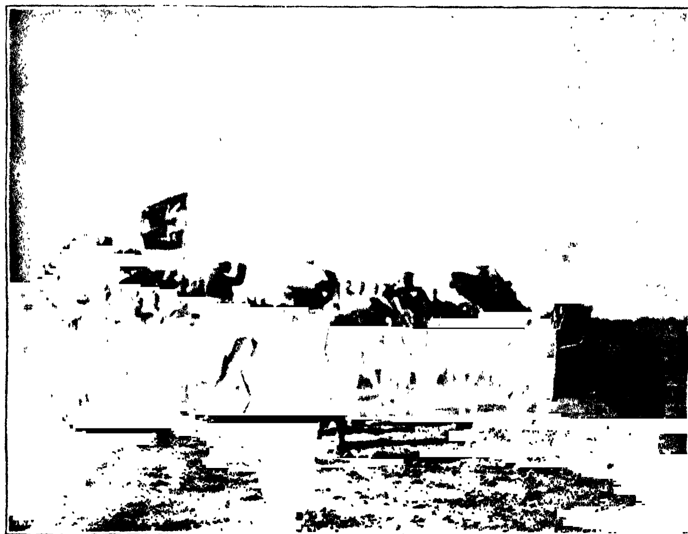
They do much better here than in their own country and get away from the petty official tyranny and corruption which is the curse of Korea. There is a steady inroad of traders and shopkeepers from Japan, as may be seen by the signs over shops in the streets of any of the principal towns, and there now appears to be hardly a good-sized village in Eastern Asia where the inevitable Japanese



Town-building in Manchuria.

photographer is not to be found. The Japanese are very keen shopkeepers and traders, and the Russians complain much of their competition. Another source of the increase of the population is the large number of coolies that the Russians are bringing in, principally from Chefoo, to work on the railway or in the various towns they are building along the route. The railway or frontier guards as they are now called numbered about 50,000 when I passed through, but by this time there are considerably more. Every three miles there are solidly-built permanent guard-houses, minor stations about on an average every

fifteen miles, and large stations about seventy miles apart. Officials, immigrants and soldiers are all encouraged to bring out their wives and families and most excellent accommodation is provided for them. There is a look of much more permanence and solidity about these barrack buildings and houses for officials in Manchuria



General Linevich and Staff.

than even in Siberia itself; in Manchuria they are all of stone or brick, in Siberia for the most part of timber.

It was in May of 1900 that the serious trouble began which ended in the military conquest by the Russians and the military occupation which has continued ever since. On July the 21st the Czar appointed General Grodekor commander-in-chief, and seven days afterwards the Chinese were beaten at Blagoveshchensk. Five divisions then entered Manchuria from different directions and made for Harbin. General Sakharov pushed up along the right bank of the Sungari towards it. General

Linevich started from Port Arthur, captured New-chwang, then Mukden, and so reached Harbin from the south. General Kennenkampf took Aigun by assault after a desperate fight of nearly nine hours, after which his Siberian soldiers slaughtered an immense number of the inhabitants, burned the city and marched from there to Tsitsikar. General Chichagov in command of the eastern division landed in Possiet Bay, marched to Ninqut, and met with but insignificant opposition. General Orloff marched from the west, and after defeating a force of over four thousand Chinese, marched on Khailar, which he took with little trouble on July the 30th. In the Kilgan Mountains he had some stiff fighting, and then pushed on marching his men continuously for eleven consecutive days at the rate of twenty miles a day, until he joined Kennenkampf at Tsitsikar on September the 1st.

The campaign was short, sharp, and decisive, and was attended by much severity on the part of the Russians. The idea of the commander-in-chief was to strike terror into the inhabitants, and his generals did so with a vengeance. On capturing a town, when the peaceable inhabitants were made prisoners, a certain number of them, varying from one in ten to one in a hundred, were put to death. We are never likely to get the true history of this campaign but some lurid glimpses of it that we have got give an idea of its horrors. Mrs Archibald Little, for instance, in the *Times*, says: "You see, when Gribsky telegraphed from Blagovestschensk asking what was to be done, the Governor of Khabarowka telegraphed back, 'In war, burn and destroy.' . . . They just took all the Chinese and forced them into the river on boats that could not carry them, and when the women threw their children on shore and begged that they at least might be saved, the Cossacks caught the babies on their bayonets and cut them to pieces. . . . Then there is a photograph taken by the request of the Governor of Aigun as the Cossacks left it, utterly

destroyed, only the great strong chimneys standing upright, not one inhabitant left in it, a city of many thousands I was told. Then there were photographs of the Chinese city of Sahaline, exactly opposite Blagovestschensk, as it was before the massacre: the finest house of the richest merchant, since dead, the curved roofs of the ornate temple, etc., and then, most striking of all, of the religious service of thanksgiving held there after the massacre. 'Not because of the massacre,' said the photographer, 'but because it had ceased to be Sahaline and become a Russian outpost.' It had certainly ceased to be Sahaline. People there still declare the river was choked with the multitude of Chinese people—unoffending, peaceable inhabitants—suddenly thrown into it, and there was another photograph of the ruins of what had been Sahaline with a party of ladies over from Blagovestschensk in the foreground enjoying the prospect and the ruins still smoking behind them, again the solid chimneys alone upstanding. In the photographs of the religious service there was a great Russian cross in the centre, and an altar and several popes round it, General Gribsky at the head of his staff on one side and all the dignitaries on the other, all solemnly returning thanks to Almighty God that they had utterly blotted out a city of 5000 or 6000 inhabitants, who no one on the spot even alleges had raised a finger against the Russians, but who had till that time been chiefly engaged in driving their carts, carrying their burdens, and serving in their shops or houses. Man, woman, and child, they had been given over to slaughter, and, to judge by appearances, the same had been the case with every Chinese settlement all along the right, or Chinese side, of the Amur River.

"Major-General Orloff, in command of the expeditionary force into Manchuria from the west, is said to have been reprimanded, some say because he appended to every one of his telegrams to headquarters, 'I entreat to be allowed to spare the peaceful inhabitants.' People have tried to

put down the excesses in China to the Russian forces there, consisting largely of Amursky Cossacks; but the people I have asked all say, 'Cossacks do not like killing, only if one of them is killed they get savage, or if they get orders from their officers then they kill every one.' 'But do their officers ever tell them to kill every one?' 'I do not say that it is right,' was the answer I got. 'I,



Russians Encamped.

of course, belong to the Hague Conference,' etc., etc. It seems but too clear that the Russian idea is, as some of them will state in conversation, that from the outset you must strike terror into the breasts of the foe, and that it is, after all, the most merciful course in the long run."

The Russians stopped at nothing in carrying out their policy of striking terror into the Chinese. The face of the country was scored by lines of these terrible marches, and they succeeded in completely cowing the inhabitants. Having gained their object by these thoroughgoing though barbarous and cruel measures, that policy was immediately changed. They now treat the Chinese with a liberality and

consideration that surprises one. This is particularly to be noticed in the conduct of the Russian officers towards the mandarins and officials, with whom they appear to be on excellent terms. There is less of that bullying with the common soldiers which shows itself in pigtail-pulling and buffeting than one would expect. Unquestionably the Russians and the Chinese get on well together, and the former seem to have a practical and working insight into how best to manage the latter. There is a more genuine feeling of democratic equality between Russians and Asiatics than I have ever seen between English or Americans and people of any yellow race. The English officials in India, for example, never get on as good terms with the natives of high rank as do the Russians with the Chinese. With the English, yellow men are always more or less contemptuously regarded as "niggers." A short time ago, travelling on a Japanese railway, a member of the British legation in Tokio entered the carriage in which were three Japanese gentlemen, all noblemen of very old lineage. He knew them and they spoke to him in most excellent English, two of them having been in the Japanese legation in London. Presently enter a lady and gentleman, friends of the Englishman. They had the appearance of wealthy globe trotters. He was dressed in check suit, travelling cap and gaiters—he had a look of Lancashire cotton or Liverpool shipping. When she had concluded a distinctly contemptuous inspection of the Japanese, she remarked: "I am surprised that the natives are allowed to travel first-class here." Her husband agreed, and she held forth on the subject in a loud voice despite the desperate attempts of the agonised young diplomat to stop her.

Entirely pacified as Manchuria is now, in a military sense, there is another in which a struggle of a different kind is only beginning. It is the struggle for trade between the yellow man and the Russian. As small traders the Chinese

are very hard to beat. They are to be found now as far as Irkutsk and even beyond, and in doing business with the aborigines they are ousting the Russian small merchant. The Chinese traders are the people who push English and American manufactured goods, which, of course, is accounted for by their stock-in-trade being drawn from the Chinese treaty ports. It is only in this indirect way that Manchuria is at present reached by British-made goods, and only to this limited extent do they find a market there. At the present moment, except in the town of Dalny, an Englishman is not permitted to buy a foot of ground, build a house, or open a store. Harbin is the city which offers the greatest attraction to merchants as a great distributing centre in the midst of a most fertile tract of country, where the purchasing power of the thriving population is rapidly increasing. The value of town sites in Harbin is going up with a rapidity equal to that of the buildings. Four roller flour-mills have been erected, that with an unlimited supply of wheat and an enormous demand for flour, are making immense profits; one of these erected in 1900 at a cost of 96,000 American dollars made a clear profit of 87,000 dollars the first year it was working. All the industries that are necessarily called into existence by the life of a modern city are here springing up simultaneously, for it must be borne in mind that even in these remote regions the towns being built are being equipped right up-to-date with electric power and lighting, tramways, telephones and so on. There is nothing of the popular idea of Siberia about these towns. Yet with all this demand of machinery, tools, materials and the infinite variety of manufactured articles required in their complicated details -- from all this market the British manufacturers are debarred; "No English need apply" is intimated as clearly and as forcibly as if it were painted over the door of every administrative building and contractor's office.

When applications to test this have made their slow

way through the "necessary channels," and have reached the "proper quarters," they come back with the reply that they must be refused during this period of "temporary military occupation," with, perhaps, the expression of a vague promise that when the country becomes more settled, foreigners will be dealt with in a more liberal spirit.

When we see the way the Russians are closing the Manchurian door except in the couple of places where, behind a nominal opening, they have built an impenetrable wall, we look for the explanation of this policy and the motive underlying, and there is no difficulty in discovering them. The Russian is not a successful man of business in comparison with either the best Europeans or Asiatics. As a small trader or shopkeeper he cannot hold his own against the Chinaman or Japanese, and has even more difficulty with them in the more important departments of business or manufacture, where he has to compete against the British, Germans or Americans. Russian statesmen are quite alive to this, and know that the only course which will give their slow-moving, conservative and unenterprising countrymen a chance is to keep the others out and give them a field free from competition. The Chinese trader is making himself felt not only in Manchuria but on through the principal Siberian cities. He has the business instincts more keenly developed, cuts things finer, and is prepared to be satisfied with smaller profits than even the Jew. The competition of the Chinaman is being severely felt throughout Manchuria, especially in those new cities built by the Russians, such as Harbin, where they not unnaturally perhaps expected to have the trade and business pretty much to themselves.

It is luminously evident to every one who regards facts as they are and who has no fancy for burying his head in the sand of platitudinous phrases, as Lord Cranborne appears to have, that the Russians have annexed Manchuria. There they are, there they will stay, even at the

cost of war. Their diplomatic campaign has been conducted with such admirable dexterity, however, that the conquest of the country will not cost them the firing of a single cartridge beyond those expended on the Chinese in 1900. At this stage no power is likely to go to war for the sake of Manchuria. Even Japan will have to get further provocation before embarking on such a herculean undertaking. The practical question is, if Russia is permitted to annex the country in this manner, are the Powers also going to tolerate that she shall slam the door of Manchuria in the faces of the merchants, traders and manufacturers of the rest of the world? Now is surely the opportune moment for demanding that the door shall be left open. The countries in closest political sympathy with Russia, such as France and Germany, while being complacently acquiescent or indifferent to her campaign of territorial aggrandisement in the Far East, would, nevertheless, not be averse to receiving the commercial recompense that would accrue from the opening of the country to foreign commerce.

"If we don't object to your robbing China of this market-place, the least you may do is to allow each of us to have a stall there for the sale of our own goods," is in plain language what ought to be intimated to Russia. The time for the complete evacuation is approaching, when we shall probably see the same farce gone through, and as much real evacuation carried out as there was last spring.

Lord Cranborne, in answer to a question in the House of Commons, still spoke like a Chinaman trying to "save his face," as if we should still believe in the coming evacuation. It was not surprising that it evoked a sarcastic telegram from Dr Morrison, the distinguished correspondent of the *Times* in Pekin.

It is astonishing that an assembly like the House of Commons, so largely composed of men of business, can remain satisfied with such a reply as that of Lord Cran-

borne's, which reminds one of the sort of plausible letter that is written by the secretary of a bogus company to satisfy elderly spinsters who are getting nervous about their investment. It may be urged that it is now too late to make any demand on Russia to open the door of Manchuria. The best opportunity has been let slip, as the Russians have now secured the power of imposing preferential rates on the railway, but it will certainly be too late if the final day for evacuation is allowed to pass without making a firm demand in a manner that will admit of no denial. While the agricultural resources of the country are obvious to the most casual traveller, the mineral resources are unascertained—the surface of the country has barely been scratched in a few places, the ground has never been thoroughly prospected, yet even the little that has been done has been sufficient to demonstrate the existence of large coalfields, immense iron deposits, as well as gold, tin and silver, sufficient to point to more than the probability of its becoming one of the greatest mining countries in the world. With the immense undeveloped tracts in Siberia, which she is now making such efforts to populate by promoting emigration from Europe, Russia will be disposed to act the dog in the manger to a great extent in Manchuria for the next fifty or a hundred years. It appears outrageous that the Powers should tolerate this. The door that has just been closed may be opened if some one knocks, but otherwise it will certainly remain closed to the trade and commerce of the rest of the world for ever.

Amongst the diversions of the journey through Manchuria was a really excellent megaphone belonging to one of the agents of the Wagons-Lits Company. He had it playing in the smoking-room one evening, and whenever we stopped it attracted a crowd of natives, who are wont to hang around the station to have a look at the express, which is the principal event of the day in some of these hermit villages. At the station of Sorne we had a

curiously mixed audience. There were the railway porters and the military, a few of whom were to be seen on every platform, some emigrants from a train which was stopping there for the night, and a number of Buriats in their greasy-looking garments of sheepskin with the woolly side turned inwards. It was amusing to watch how they looked open-mouthed at the brass mouth of the megaphone, evidently never having seen or heard anything like it before. After giving a piece from an opera, which must have sounded rather strange to them, it struck up one of those glorious Russian hymns. The instrument had caught the very echoes of the cathedral aisles in which it must have been sung, and as it streamed out on the still evening air, first one old peasant then others doffed their fur caps, then the wild-looking Buriats followed their example and the bareheaded crowd stood silent listening to the prayer they knew, which, judging by their expression, one might imagine they suspected was being rendered by some contrivance of the devil.

CHAPTER XI

THE PATH OF EMPIRE THROUGH MONGOLIA

THE RUSSO-CHINESE BANK—DEXTEROUS DIPLOMACY—A WONDERFUL GOLD FIND—A WILY OLD LLAMA—DISCARDING CHINA'S SUZERAINTY—A LINE IS LAID PEKINWARDS—THE INEVITABLE RAILWAY GUARDS—A FORTIFIED STATION STRONGHOLD—THIRTY MILES FROM PEKIN—THE HOISTING OF THE FLAG

IN her relations with Mongolia Russia has used exactly the same methods as in the case of Manchuria. The result is in a fair way to be the same, and the assimilation or pacific conquest of the country is only a matter of quite a short time. Forceful yet dexterous diplomacy, invasion by railway, and millions of roubles judiciously expended through the agency of the Russo-Chinese Bank has won, or is winning, that vast territory for her.

It is well to bear in mind the position of Mongolia. The Trans-Siberian Railway runs close along its northern frontier from the Khingan Mountains to Lake Baikal, and beyond that is not far distant from it. Its eastern frontier is bounded by Manchuria, and on the south it is bounded by the Great Wall of China, which at Kalgan is only sixty miles from Pekin. The population of Mongolia is given by the best authorities at 2,000,000, and its area at 1,300,000 square miles. A considerable portion of the country is occupied by the Gobi Desert, the barrenness of which many writers have exaggerated, for it supplies fair pasturage throughout the greater part for horses and camels. The mineral resources of the country, although it has been very

little prospected, are known to be considerable, and the Russians, during the three years that they have interested themselves in the country, have not only paid their expenses but made a handsome profit on the small portion of the goldfields that they have worked.

It is most interesting to trace the history of the Russian invasion. The first reconnaissance was made by the Russo-Chinese Bank, which established a branch at Urga, under the management of M. Grot, who at one time served under Sir Robert Hart in the Imperial Maritime Customs, a man of singular ability, tact and pushfulness, who, like M. Pokotiloff in Pekin, combined the qualities of minister and financial agent. He was not long there before Tushet Khan was numbered amongst the customers of the bank, and soon became a creditor for a considerable amount. M. Grot quickly satisfied himself as to the richness and extent of the goldfields close to Urga, which, as it was against the law to dig for gold or precious metals, had been left undeveloped. The khans of Mongolia being under the suzerainty of the Emperor of China, it was necessary to obtain the latter's permission before the goldfields could be worked. Application for this was made in Pekin by the Russian minister there, and eventually was granted to the Russo-Chinese Bank. The khan, however, objected, and insisted on the maintenance of the ancient law, notwithstanding the arguments put forward by M. Grot, who had already ordered mining machinery from America, and as a matter of fact was proceeding with its erection. In this crisis he applied to the Grand Llama and tried to win him to his side with a view to bringing his influence to bear on the khan. The wily old Bogdo Gegen was willing to listen to him, and was gracious enough to accept a *douceur* of 15,000 roubles, but having pocketed it he declared himself as directly opposed to the granting of what M. Grot wanted. M. S. Hishmarieff, the Russian consul, who was working with M. Grot, then applied to the Chinese High

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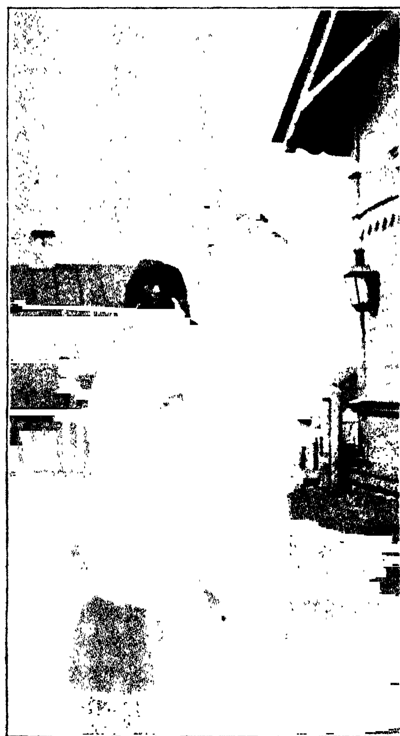
IN her relations with Mongolia Russia has used exactly the same methods as in the case of Manchuria. The result is in a fair way to be the same, and the assimilation or pacific conquest of the country is only a matter of quite a short time. Forceful yet dexterous diplomacy, invasion by railway, and millions of roubles judiciously expended through the agency of the Russo-Chinese Bank has won, or is winning, that vast territory for her.

It is well to bear in mind the position of Mongolia. The Trans-Siberian Railway runs close along its northern frontier from the Khingan Mountains to Lake Baikal, and beyond that is not far distant from it. Its eastern frontier is bounded by Manchuria, and on the south it is bounded by the Great Wall of China, which at Kalgan is only sixty miles from Pekin. The population of Mongolia is given by the best authorities at 2,000,000, and its area at 1,300,000 square miles. A considerable portion of the country is occupied by the Gobi Desert, the barrenness of which many writers have exaggerated, for it supplies fair pasturage throughout the greater part for horses and camels. The mineral resources of the country, although it has been very

little prospected, are known to be considerable, and the Russians, during the three years that they have interested themselves in the country, have not only paid their expenses but made a handsome profit on the small portion of the goldfields that they have worked.

It is most interesting to trace the history of the Russian invasion. The first reconnaissance was made by the Russo-Chinese Bank, which established a branch at Urga, under the management of M. Grot, who at one time served under Sir Robert Hart in the Imperial Maritime Customs, a man of singular ability, tact and pushfulness, who, like M. Pokotiloff in Pekin, combined the qualities of minister and financial agent. He was not long there before Tushet Khan was numbered amongst the customers of the bank, and soon became a creditor for a considerable amount. M. Grot quickly satisfied himself as to the richness and extent of the goldfields close to Urga, which, as it was against the law to dig for gold or precious metals, had been left undeveloped. The khans of Mongolia being under the suzerainty of the Emperor of China, it was necessary to obtain the latter's permission before the goldfields could be worked. Application for this was made in Pekin by the Russian minister there, and eventually was granted to the Russo-Chinese Bank. The khan, however, objected, and insisted on the maintenance of the ancient law, notwithstanding the arguments put forward by M. Grot, who had already ordered mining machinery from America, and as a matter of fact was proceeding with its erection. In this crisis he applied to the Grand Llama and tried to win him to his side with a view to bringing his influence to bear on the khan. The wily old Bogdo Gegen was willing to listen to him, and was gracious enough to accept a *douceur* of 15,000 roubles, but having pocketed it he declared himself as directly opposed to the granting of what M. Grot wanted. M. S. Hishmarieff, the Russian consul, who was working with M. Grot, then applied to the Chinese High

Commissioner at Urga, but he had not been informed by his government of the gold-mining concession, knew nothing about the matter in dispute, and finally washed his hands of the whole affair. The Russian representative adroitly urged that by so doing he abandoned the right of the suzerainty on behalf of his imperial master. Tushet Khan was not slow to take up this view; there was considerable excitement at Urga, and he summoned the great Kuriltai, the highest assembly or House of Lords of the nation. It had a series of exciting sessions in which a considerable party urged the mobilisation of the militia for the purpose of expelling all foreigners, and asserting their complete independence. It was now that M. Grot proved his ability as a diplomatist; with persistent energy he urged the case for Russia. He pointed out how Mongolia would be enriched by the development of trade, directed their attention to the prosperity of their neighbours, the Buriats, under Russian rule, urged the advantages of his bank being allowed to build a branch of the Siberian Railway down to Kalgan, and above all impressed upon them the importance of having the Czar as a friend who was willing to take upon himself the duty of protect-


A Buriat and a Station-master.

ing them against foreign invasion and aggression. As a help to his persuasive powers M. Grot was lavish in his gifts to the members of the Kuraltai, and the judicious distribution of over 100,000 roubles to these wretchedly impoverished noblemen worked wonders. As result, that portion of the Mongol militia which had already been mobilised was disbanded, and the khan and his countrymen placed themselves formally under the protection of the Czar. Immediately after, four squadrons of Buriat Cossacks arrived in Urga; they were Buddhists, and spoke the same language as the natives, who received them with a cordial welcome. The next move of the astute M. Grot was to strongly fortify his bank and the Russian consulate, ostensibly to protect the city against any aggressive move on the part of their cast-off suzerain, in reality to place the town absolutely at the mercy of the Russians. The work of gold-washing was pushed forward with renewed energy, and at once commenced to yield magnificent returns, as much as £30,000 worth of gold being won in a single month.

Within a few months rumours of the Boxer rising reached Urga, and came as a perfect godsend to the Russians, who took care to magnify their importance. Cossacks were sent south, more troops were brought into Urga, this time infantry and three batteries of artillery, and fortified barracks and storehouses, such as are to be seen along the railway through Manchuria, were built for their accommodation. In addition to the use made of the Boxer scare there was another point of similarity between the campaign in Mongolia and that in Manchuria. The Hun-hu-ses, the marauding bands of robbers that we hear so much of from Russian sources in Manchuria, and which are given as the excuse for so much military activity, had here their counterpart in the Tsakhars, a tribe who were accused of pillaging tea caravans, and who of course had to have bands of Cossacks sent to punish them. The Cossacks sent after

the Tsakhars, and as a result of the Boxer scare, were as advance skirmishers along the route that was afterwards to be taken by the railway. They proceeded till they reached the pass of Sewan-tze, where they built a fort and fortified barracks. This commands the descent to Kalgan and the road to Pekin, because the old wall of China no longer opposes any real obstacle to the progress of modern troops. The importance of this pass can hardly be over-estimated, as it brings the Russians within seventy miles' striking distance of Pekin itself, and enables them at their leisure, and unknown to the Chinese or to any one else, to assemble and mass troops behind it whenever they find it desirable to do so.

There are those in China, and not the least well-informed, who believe in the existence of a secret treaty between the Empress-Dowager and Russia, whereby it is agreed that the latter is to be prepared to defend the Manchu dynasty in time of need. Just as Russia stepped in and the Czar extended his protection to Tushet Khan, so he is said to be prepared to defend the Empress-Dowager against any revolutionists who would attack her dynasty. As China is full of conspirators who have that object in view, the occasion might arise at any moment, and by means of this latest path of empire opened by Russia through Mongolia she is only two days' distant from the capital, which she would inevitably find it incumbent on herself to occupy in defence of the dynasty, and from there could spread the ægis of her protection over the northern provinces of the empire.

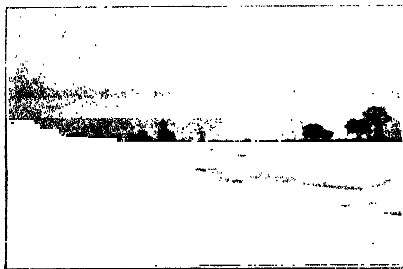
The Russian troops and their officers who were sent to Mongolia behaved admirably, they won the goodwill of the inhabitants and managed to make themselves regarded as the actual defenders of the country. So much did this feeling develop that the Russians were able to hold a festival in Urga in December 1900, to celebrate and proclaim the auspicious event of the extension of the Czar's

protection and friendship. General Matsieffski, the Governor of Trans-Bakalia, came down from Irkutsk to represent his imperial majesty; a great banquet was held, and the Imperial Standard was hoisted with all the pomp and ceremony that the Russians could give to the act. The governor made a significant speech at the banquet, in which he stated that, as a result of this new understanding or alliance, they might look to the southern frontier of Mongolia being moved still farther south.

More significance attaches in the mind of the Russian to the hoisting of the flag on account of the remarkable saying of Nicholas the First, which has passed into a proverb, and is a guiding maxim for their diplomats and soldiers. It was on the occasion when Admiral Nevelskoi had pushed on eastward, right into the Amur territory, and annexed it, and the Council repudiated his action and were for having him retire, but Nicholas I. said, "Where the Russian flag is once hoisted it must never be hauled down." This principle, which was announced for the Amur provinces in the year 1846, will be acted up to as regards Mongolia now.

In December 1900 the Russians commenced the survey for the railway to Kalgan, which they finished within seven months; that the country was not very difficult is indicated by the fact that the survey party started in a large traction engine or automobile, which was driven over the entire route. The old caravan route from China went right through the Gobi Desert, but the course selected for the railway was farther eastward; it skirts the lower slopes of the Kilgan range, just where with tuft-covered surface the foot-hills merge into the plain. There is no tunnelling, there are no large bridges to be made or any engineering difficulties to be encountered. Just as in the case of the Siberian and Manchurian railways, a rough line was first laid down rapidly, which at their leisure they can ballast and convert into a substantial permanent way. The con-

struction was carried on under one of the engineers of the Manchurian railway, Mr Bocharov. It is of the same gauge as the Manchurian railway, and if the line between Kalgan and Pekin—the construction of which was blocked by the British government—were made it would shorten the route by rail from Pekin to Europe by 900 miles, bringing it within 5400 miles of St Petersburg. It leaves the main line about 70 miles from Khailar, runs almost due south to the east of Lake Buir Nor, and its course is then a little west of south, instead of south-east, as we see it marked on many of the maps.



Kalgan Railway.

Its construction was commenced in December 1901, and has been carried on with that overmastering vigour which is characteristic of Russian methods in the East. Russian labourers and artisans are sent down in large numbers both from the Chinese eastern and the Trans-Baikal section of the line; 20,000,000 roubles in silver were sent by caravan through Kiakhta, and since work was commenced the utmost secrecy was observed, and on one excuse or another any few casual foreigners were kept out of the country, so that even now, when the temporary line is completed, it is almost impossible to obtain definite information regarding it. Needless to say that this line, as well as that through Manchuria, will require railway guards, and they will require fortified barracks and large store-houses for supplies, and these will probaby be seen in process of completion when the first foreigners are permitted to travel down the line. So far the Russians have interfered with the natives in no way except as regards the roads and lines of communication, and the

development of their goldfields. They have managed them with such wonderful tact that there is no animosity of feeling between the protectors and the protected, and the latter have the novel experience of having an immense amount of well-paid employment offered and large sums of money expended in the country.

Their pacific campaign in Mongolia, which has been conducted so quietly, must cause the Russians to chuckle with gratification. The produce of the gold-mines has paid all working expenses, their flag has been hoisted and their railway has been built without protest or opposition from the Powers. They are on a fair way to the annexation of a country four times the area of Manchuria, with a population of only 2,000,000; and when we bear in mind that, taking the rate of increase in the population of Russia, which has been so steady for the last 200 years that it may be counted upon to continue in the same ratio, which will mean that by the middle of this century there will be 135,000,000 Russians more on the face of the globe than there were at the time of the census in 1897, this increase in colonisable area is indeed no small matter.

CHAPTER XII

LAKE BAIKAL

AN INTERESTING BREAK—SLEIGHING ACROSS—THE HOME OF THE WAR-GOD—SEALS—HOW THE LAKE WAS FORMED—CROSSING IT IN SUMMER—THE FUTURE ROUTE—A SIBERIAN FUNERAL—THE ICE-BREAKER—THE MIRRORED MOUNTAINS—THE SNOW-FRINGED ANGARA—THE IMPERIAL EXPRESS—ANOTHER RESTING-PLACE

THE crossing of Lake Baikal makes the one great break in the long journey from the Pacific to Moscow. It is doubtful if it will add to the pleasure of the traveller to have the railway, at which they are now at work and which is to do away with this trip, completed. In the winter the journey has to be done in sleighs, which meet the trains on the eastern side, and with a stop at a refreshment booth and waiting-room, erected in the middle of the lake, reach the other side in about seven hours. Lake Baikal, which is called the "Holy Sea" by the Russians, is the largest fresh-water lake in the Old World. On the rest of the globe there are only three in America and one in Africa that surpass it in size. It is 34,000 square kilomètres in area and the depth of the lake in the southern part is over 4000 feet. The shore along which the railway is to be constructed presents the most serious difficulties, as it is a succession of steep promontories and deep clefts, which necessitate an immense number of short tunnels and bridges. The total cost of the line is estimated at twenty-five million roubles, or about eighty roubles per verst.

After passing through such an extent of monotonous

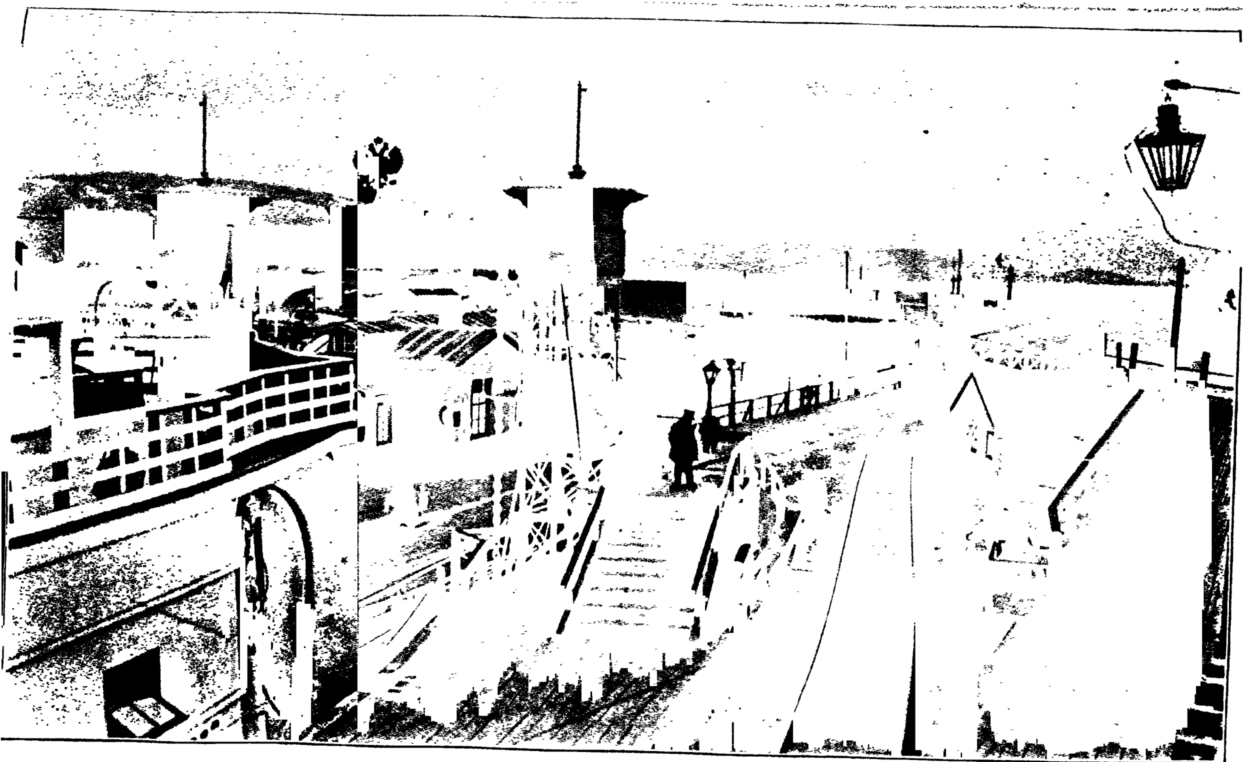
level plains, one appreciates the more in contrast the mountains that surround Lake Baikal. Although they do not exceed 6000 feet, they are so much covered with snow for the greater part of the year, that where they rise abruptly above the level of the lake they give one the impression of very much greater height. The lake and its many islands are especially venerated by the aborigines. Llama priests and Buriat Shamans go out to the island of Olkhan to offer sacrifice to the evil spirit, Begdoozi. The Mongolians regard it as the site of a fortified camp of their oldest hero, Chingiz-Khan. At the overflow of the Sungari there is a cliff which is sacred to the White War God, where crowds of Buriats may frequently be seen going on pilgrimages to offer sacrifice. The lake itself is probably of volcanic origin, and is considered to be formed by the sinking following a violent earthquake. Slight shocks of earthquake are frequently experienced at the present day. There is a curious kind of sea-wax found on the eastern side of the lake which burns with a bright flame and contains a quantity of paraffin of the best quality. At this end of the lake there are some springs which give out an oily liquid, rather like naphtha. This district has not yet been thoroughly prospected for oil, of which there are many indications to be found there. Owing probably to the winds, which almost incessantly prevail, the lake does not begin to freeze until November. It then quickly forms an ice cover, which sometimes reaches a depth of from nine to ten feet. The breaking of the ice, which occurs about April, is accompanied by loud crashing noises like a succession of explosions, followed by a long rolling sound, resembling distant thunder. Huge crevices are formed in which the water rises to the level of the ice, which freezes again to a slight depth. In addition to a great variety of fish there are seals found in the lake, which the Buriats catch when the ice is open, and use their skins, especially those of the young ones, for making their own overcoats,

and do a good trade in them with the Russian fur merchants.

These seals (*Phoca annealata*) are of the same species as is found on the shores of the Arctic Ocean ; they are to be found in the Caspian Sea, which also gives confirmation to the theory of a great general depression of Northern Asia during recent geological times. It is said that seals were formerly found in the Aral Sea, but have now disappeared from there. There are an immense quantity of magnificent salmon in Lake Baikal, and fishing gives a large amount of employment to the natives, and there is no reason why canneries might not be profitably worked there as in British Columbia.

The surface of the lake is 1561 feet above sea-level, and at its deepest point, which is in the south-west, is 2624 feet below it.

When I looked out of the train at six-thirty in the morning I found we were skirting the shores of Lake Baikal, which stretched away on our right and was covered with snow-laden ice. We arrived at Myssovaia at eight o'clock, and found we had a wait there of nearly four hours until the arrival of one of three goods trains that was to be taken on board the steamer that goes across the lake. It gave us time, however, to walk about and see the little that was to be seen in the town. There is a wooden church on rising ground near the station, from which a sweet-sounding chime of bells was tolling. The path leading to the church was strewn with palm branches. Presently we saw a funeral procession approaching; the coffin was carried into the church, and a service began which lasted about a couple of hours. The men were on the right and the women, most of whom had their heads covered with small shawls, on the left. As the congregation entered they purchased tapers, which they lighted and held in their hands during the service. About the doorway were ranged some of the most picturesque beggars I have ever seen—



The Train running on board the Steamer at Lake Bai'al

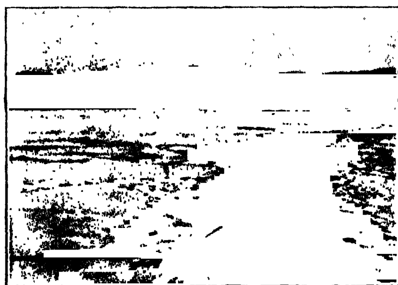
patriarchal old men, with long beards and hair, leaning on staffs. The singing, without any instrumental accompaniment, was really quite beautiful in its simple impressiveness. It was in a style of its own that I have never heard out of Russia, the first part of each verse or phrase sung staccato ending in a drawn-out wail.

It was twelve o'clock when the ice-breaking steamer left. She carried three trains, but not our express, which was run down the pier and stopped a few yards from the steamer. The ice when we started was nearly two feet thick, and it was interesting to see huge slabs of it tossed about or submerged as our steamer started from the pier.

This ice-breaking vessel, the *Baikal*, was made by the Armstrongs in England, and sent over to Russia piecemeal, where it was put together by Russian workmen under the superintendence of an English engineer. Owing to the precipitous nature of the cliffs on the shore of the lake and the frequent storms the work was attended with great difficulty and delay. She has three triple-expansion engines of 3750 horse-power, and displacement of 4200 tons. Her length is 290 feet, draught 20 feet, and beam 57 feet. A peculiar feature of her construction is that one of the engines is in the forepart of the vessel, and works a screw in the bow separately which, besides breaking the ice, sucks the water from under the surface, on which the overhanging bow crushes down with the whole weight of the steamer. The screws are all provided with four blades. In appearance she is rather like the largest type of New York ferry steamers, with a high upper promenade deck, and is ballasted with tanks just over the double bottom containing over 500 tons of water. The belt around the hull, where it meets the ice, is made of steel plates an inch thick, and a timber belt in addition two inches thick. A thickness of about four feet of ice is the utmost that she can succeed in breaking through. The cost of this vessel,

including landing-stages and docks on each side, amounted to six million roubles.

The day was perfectly calm, and the snow-topped mountains were reflected as in a mirror on the water of the cracks or pools between the ice-floes. Up to the middle of April passengers have to cross the lake in sleighs. Tremendously powerful as is the huge vessel, she does not quite realise the expectations of her inventor, who thought she would have been able to break through so as to make the passage all the winter. As we went on, the ice became less thick, until we came into quite open water. There was not a ripple on its surface, and the effect of the reflection of the mountains, purple and brown with snow-capped peaks, was superb. The air was very cold, but clear and bracing, which sharpened our appetites for an excellent lunch, that was served on board. In less than eighteen months this journey will be done away with, as the railway around the lake will be completed. We arrived at the opposite side at four o'clock, the journey having taken just four hours. It frequently takes longer. Only a few days before it had been very stormy, and there was quite a big sea on, which made the steamer roll heavily and the broken ice creak and groan with a prodigious noise, while at every roll many of the Russians on board would commence crossing themselves with a rapidity accelerated by their fears. It is a stormy lake, Baikal, and capable of working up as nasty a sea as between Dover and Calais.



In the wake of the Ice-breaker.

In that deliberate style in which things are done

throughout the route, our luggage was transferred to the train that was waiting for us. This was the Russian train of the Trans-Siberian Company. It was not to be compared with the express of the Chinese Eastern Company, which had brought us to the other side of the lake, although it was comfortable enough in its way, but perhaps the luxury we had enjoyed during the previous week made us hypercritical. To begin with, the carriages were much lower, thus not giving room for stowing luggage overhead to the same extent as the other. Then the windows, both in the compartments and in the dining-saloon, were very small, and gave one the feeling of looking out on the scenery as if from a ship's porthole. The cars looked old and considerably the worse for wear. If one could be sure of getting a second-class compartment to oneself, or even one between two, it would be more comfortable and roomy than a first-class. The dining-saloon possessed the doubtful attraction of a piano—out of tune, and it also had a small library of books in Russian. The food on this train, judging from a light dinner I had on the way to Irkutsk, was good and not expensive. I had a cut of the most delicious sturgeon I think I ever tasted (Lake Baikal being noted for this fish), some well-cooked cutlets and a bottle of beer for one rouble seventy kopeks, the portions being quite sufficient for two people. The train skirted along the east bank of the Angara, a wide stream which was dotted with many islands, on which in places the snow had not yet melted, but was lying in patches two and three feet deep. Close on half-past seven we steamed into Irkutsk. As we approached, the first view of it as seen across the broad-sweeping flood of the river was very striking. Above the level of the housetops rose the towers, spires and cupolas of many churches with green roofs and gilt crosses; great masses of brick and stone buildings of the administration, hospitals, and a few good-sized factories gave the impression of a more stately city than one was

prepared to see in the middle of Siberia. Here I left the train to stop for a few days as an agreeable break in the journey, which gives one an opportunity of getting an insight into Siberian life. This I can strongly recommend to any one who has the time to spare. I found a man from the Métropole Hotel, at which I was going to stay, waiting on the platform, and in a few minutes we were crossing the river over the long pontoon bridge. The stream, although wide, is very rapid, and the curious wooden structure is held up by about twenty pontoons. It was thronged with variegated traffic. Flat-faced Tartars riding with very short stirrups on shaggy ponies, were driving herds of wild-looking cattle, droskies and carts of various shapes and sizes, and on the footpaths brawny, splendid-looking peasants—the women and girls with shawls drawn tightly over their heads, the men mostly in fur caps. There is something distinctly imposing about the appearance of the city as one enters it by the bridge. It is built on gently rising ground, partly surrounded by the Angara and the Ushakovka, which joins it there. The Métropole is quite a good hotel, with a very excellent restaurant, much frequented by Russian officers and officials. The fish, meat and Russian soup is very good and served in portions suitable for Russian appetites. They only charge one rouble for a dinner of four courses. One exception I found to their cheap charges. I asked for a bottle of stout. The waiter asked me if I wanted English stout, and I said "Yes," finding afterwards the charge was three roubles (six shillings), and that a bottle of Bass would have been three roubles fifty kopeks. There are no open fireplaces in the house. It is heated by small furnaces, which are let into the solid masonry of the walls and open on the passages. With these and the double windows and doors it must be a comfortable inn during the great cold of the long winter.

CHAPTER XIII

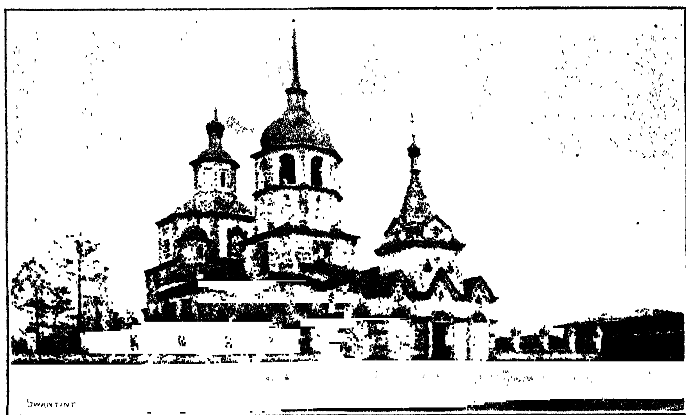
IRKUTSK

A SUCCESSION OF SURPRISES—HUNGRY FOR POPULATION—THE SHOPS AND THEATRE—ITS INNUMERABLE INSTITUTIONS—SEVENTY MILLIONS IN GOLD—ILLICIT GOLD-BUYING—HOW HOLY RUSSIA PRAYS—GARROTTING—A VISIT TO THE PRISON—THE FUTURE OF THE CITY

THE exploring of the city means a succession of surprises. Irkutsk is not in the least like what one expects to find in the midst of Siberia, four thousand miles from Moscow. Except Tomsk, it is the largest town in Northern Asia, having a population of 55,000, but with its fine churches and public buildings, broad streets and wide squares it somehow gives one the idea of being very much larger. The town had its origin in 1652, when the son of Ivan Pakhobor established an intrenched post surrounded by a moat and strongly fortified, from which he collected the tribute of furs paid by the Buriats. The whole of Siberia was placed under the administration of a governor-general in 1803, who made his residence in Irkutsk, and the succeeding governors have had much to say to the extension of Russian dominion eastward. Count Muraviov-Amursky it was, for instance, who annexed the Amur region, and Count Ignatiev, by the energy and ability that he brought to bear on accelerating the Trans-Siberian Railway, has helped to accomplish indirectly as much in the way of conquest.

As the town stands to-day it, like most of the other cities of Siberia, has everything ready for the reception of

an immensely larger population than it contains at present. There are, for instance, two large cathedrals, one to Our Lady of Kazan, the other to the Epiphany, no less than 29 Orthodox churches, 14 parish churches, and 13 private chapels attached to the largest houses. There are 45 educational establishments, 15 charitable institutions, and a large number of scientific and social clubs and societies. The theatre, a handsome stone building, was



Cathedral of the Epiphany.

built at a cost of 300,000 roubles, nearly altogether made up by subscriptions from the inhabitants. There is a fine museum which contains a very complete collection, from which a good idea can be got of the manner of life of the various aboriginal tribes. I happened to visit it on a Sunday afternoon and found the lecture-hall crowded with children listening to a discourse on elementary botany exemplified by the flowers of the district.

The main street, a broad thoroughfare lined with solidly built stone houses on each side, runs right through the town and contains a succession of fine shops, well stocked with every variety of goods, at one of which I was able to



Irkutsk.

get fresh films, as it contained all the latest photographic supplies. Alongside it was a store full of American machinery, and the city was particularly strong in excellent confectionery shops. There was a noticeable absence throughout the town of goods for sale bearing English labels, whereas American goods were plentifully in evidence; this applies not only to Irkutsk but to the whole of Siberia and Manchuria. Particularly in the sale of agricultural machinery is this the case. I met several representatives of American firms who were doing a roaring trade, and now, having been first in the field and got hold of the market, it will be all the more difficult for other manufacturers to oust them. The phonograph is a machine which has greatly taken the fancy of the Russians; they are to be seen for sale in every town, and large ones take the place of a band at the chief restaurants all the way from Manchuria to Moscow.

Irkutsk, being one of the centres of the gold-mining industry, it possesses one of the three government laboratories established in the empire; of the others, one is at Ekaterinburg for the Ural district, and the other at Tomsk. Since the one in Irkutsk was started in 1870 it has received gold to the value of £70,000,000. All the gold obtained in Siberia has to be sold to the government, at least that is the law, but there is a large traffic carried on in illicit gold-buying, which flourishes to a much greater extent than the I.D.B. or illicit diamond-buying industry in South Africa. There are a large number of Chinese in the city of Irkutsk, and many of these, while ostensibly carrying on the occupation of fur merchants, really make their money by purchasing gold dust which they export to China. Most of the gold in Siberia is alluvial and is brought into the laboratory in the form of dust, where it is assayed, weighed and melted. Although Russia produces at present over 10 per cent. of the total gold output of the world, it must be borne in mind that a great part of this, as far

as Siberia is concerned, is got from the beds of rivers, where the alluvial has been washed down, and that the mother-lodes in the mountains from which it has come have yet hardly been tapped or exploited at all. During the last few years the yield from some of the best places has been rather on the decline owing to some of the alluvial deposits being worked out, but against this there are the magnificent discoveries recently made in Mongolia, which are now being exclusively worked by the Russians, and several very valuable finds have been newly located in the north and east of Siberia. One of the chief difficulties the mining companies have to contend with is the inadequate supply of skilled labour. Of ordinary labourers there are not enough, but of men capable of handling machinery and so forth there is a woeful deficiency. People! people! that is what the whole country is crying out for, and now at last the cry appears to be heard, and the railway gives them the means of coming in answer to it. There are not many manufacturers in Irkutsk, tanning is about the leading industry, with half-a-dozen fur manufactories, some tallow factories, five distilleries and five breweries, in one of which a German makes most excellent laager beer. There is a large tea trade, the duties of which collected at the custom-house average close on 10,000,000 roubles annually.

The evening I arrived at Irkutsk being Saturday, I went to the service at the Cathedral, for which the chime of great bells in the tower was rolling out a summons. It is close by the river, and on the bank is a commemorative arch which marks the place where the present Czar landed at the time of his visit. The footprints of the Czar are thus marked in many towns throughout Siberia. The double-eagle which surmounts the arch was sharply silhouetted against the clear sky where the sun had gone down behind the Monastery of the Ascension, one of the richest in Siberia. There was a shimmering heat in the air above

the dusty banks that made the smooth surface of the water look peacefully refreshing as it silently swept by, mirroring the afterglow. At that hour the open space round the cathedral was more suggestive of Mexico than Siberia. As the last boom of the great bell mellowed out I turned towards the church. A straggling stream of people were going in the same direction; in front of me was a broad-shouldered Russian general in long light-grey overcoat and bushy beard, women and children, and at the gate



Towards the Church.

picturesque and patriarchal-looking beggars that lined the entrance passage from the outer door to the inner which opened into the cathedral itself. It was deliciously cool, coming in from the hot air outside. The walls were enormously massive, as were the supports for the dome. The holy of holies or inner altar was veiled by a highly wrought screen, the great pictures gleamed in gold, the priests in scarlet vestments, many tapers burning, and the aromatic perfume of incense in the tomb-cold air all together formed a striking picture of contrast to the scenes without. A priest was chanting slowly in a deep loud voice that sounded like the drawing of a bow across the string

of a double bass fiddle. He finished and closed a big book on the stand before him, kissing its gold-wrought cover. Then from some invisible choir of many voices there sighed out harmoniously some swelling chords of "Amen," for which the walls made sounding-boards for echo. There was silence for some minutes; the congregation, standing, bowed and crossed themselves, then the choir softly and in restrained modulation began a hymn in a quaint rhythm, the first part of each phrase sounding as if in eager importunity, ending in a wail that seemed to cry for divine compassion or humble supplication. It was as the voice of a pleading child multiplied. The four-part harmony was beautiful. The choir was composed exclusively of men, one with a simply superb tenor voice. The effect produced by these deep-chested choristers in the echoing building was extraordinary, one could hardly believe that there was no organ or harmonium accompanying them; the air was saturated with booming sound as from the bass pipes of an organ. Perhaps it was the result of long deprivation from music that made me think it was the most beautiful I had ever heard. After all there is no instrument equal to the human voice. An old Russian general stood near me and joined occasionally in intoning the responses. The men were on the right-hand side of the nave, the women on the left; there were no seats except a few by the wall, and all the congregation stood or knelt throughout the service. They used no prayer-books but kept constantly punctuating their prayers by crossing themselves and bowing, the women and children often touching the ground with their foreheads in deep obeisance. It was a markedly devout congregation, and something in the whole scene gave a real meaning to the phrase "Holy Russia."

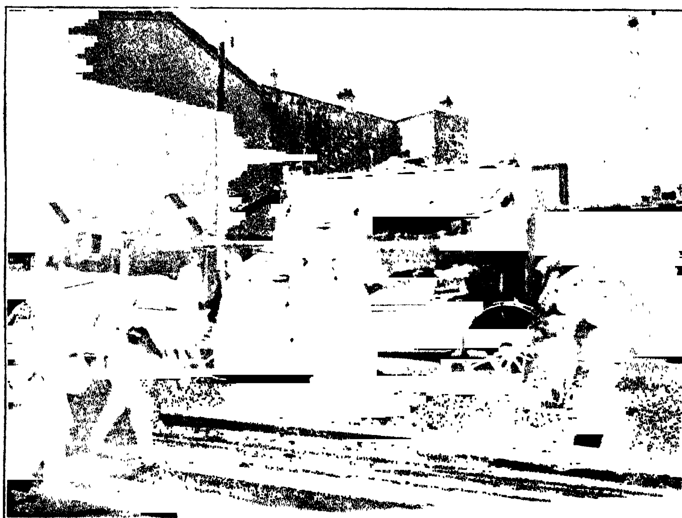
In a certain sense Irkutsk is one of the worst towns in Siberia. It is a centre which attracts numbers of that large army of criminal vagabonds who roam the country living by thieving and highway robbery, and who are capable

of committing almost any crime. The number of murders in Irkutsk in a year is simply appalling, and the police force of the town is entirely inadequate to deal with the floating population of ruffians who constantly infest it. In consequence it is unsafe to go about the streets at night, and I have never seen any city with such an absolutely deserted appearance after dark. Its dreary solitude after nightfall is disturbed only by watchmen who walk along the middle of the road sounding a wooden clapper somewhat after the style of those in Chinese cities with their gongs. Two murders were committed in the streets the week before I was there; garrotting is of most frequent occurrence, the assailant stealing up quietly behind his victim throws a noose of catgut over his head with which he strangles him.

The system is now being changed which produced these lawless marauders, made up of criminals and exiles transported from Russia who, too lazy to work after getting away from surveillance, are a perfect scourge to the peaceful inhabitants of the country. They are composed chiefly of those who have been sentenced to banishment by the mirs or village communes—the drunkards, and those who were so incorrigibly idle and useless as to be expelled by their fellows from the village communities in which they lived. This power of sentencing to exile has been now taken from the mir, and exiled criminals are all to be sent to Sakhalin, so the annual contingents of recruits for that vagabond army will no longer be forthcoming.

It was interesting to have an opportunity of visiting the great prison, which at the time I was there contained just a thousand prisoners. It is surrounded by a high palisade of stripped tree trunks pointed at the top; inside this is a courtyard, and the building itself is a square whitewashed structure with small windows and a number of wooden outhouses attached to it. These latter are the workshops and laundry, and there is also a hospital within the enclosure.

There was no great difficulty in obtaining permission from the governor to inspect it, nor did it appear to me that there was any reason why there should be, because a visit would probably have the effect of altering for the better the preconceived idea of the average visitor of what a Siberian prison is like. A number of prisoners there at the time had been condemned to Sakhalin; these, and some of the con-



A Funeral in Irkutsk.

victs condemned to long terms, had half their heads shaved and were confined in cells where there was much more air and light, and they seemed altogether more comfortable than the cells in the Sing-Sing prison in New York. All the prisoners were dressed in thick grey-felt trousers and wore overcoats over flannel shirts. A large proportion of the inmates were confined there while awaiting trial, and all these with some of the convicts occupied very large rooms, and slept on sloping shelves similar to those occupied by emigrants in the railway trucks. They were all

quite as well clothed as the average Russian peasant, quite as well housed, and from what I saw of the meal being prepared, just as well fed. There were various types of faces, and amongst them I must say some of the most villainous and forbidding that I have ever seen ; some had a sullen, vacant, half-idiotic expression, they looked like the ne'er-do-weels who might have been expelled from their villages, or confirmed drunkards during a term of enforced abstinence. If one were to judge merely by appearances one could not but think that the country was all the better for being rid of them, while the faces of the worst made one speculate as to whether the abolition of capital punishment in Russia was a blessing after all. There were no political prisoners there at the time of my visit, and certainly it would be a terrible punishment to any but men of the lowest class to be thrown into association with such a crew. They all seemed to be on good terms with the broad-shouldered, long-bearded chief gaoler, some of them even laughing and joking with him as he cross-questioned them for my benefit about the cause of their incarceration and their past history. I must say that I was favourably impressed by all that I saw there, and could quite understand that some of the vagabonds of the country consider it not too bad a place to make their winter-quarters. In judging of the prisons of Siberia we must always bear in mind that the standard of comfort of the people who compose the inmates before they are condemned is not high, and that many of the hardships that writers enlarge upon are very little worse than what they have been accustomed to all their lives. Under the new laws regulating the exile system the size of the Irkutsk prison or the number occupying it is not likely to increase, but the rest of the town is bound to do so and prosper in the immediate future, occupying as it does such an important corner site in the cross roads where the highway of the river intersects that of the railway.

CHAPTER XIV

PEOPLE ONE MEETS ON THE WAY

THE NATIVES—MANCHUS—YAKUTS—BURIATS—MONGOLS—SHAMANISM THEIR RELIGION—MILITARY TRAVELLERS—GLOBE TROTTERS—THE PROFESSOR—THE TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE OF A MISSIONARY WITH A RUSSIAN SAUSAGE

ALL the way on the journey across the continent one gets opportunities of seeing something of the peoples through whose territories this path of empire has been laid. As a rule one need not wander far from the line, because they congregate at the stations to see the express pass, and to gaze at its passengers with dour and undemonstrative curiosity. During the first half of the journey one sees Chinese, Manchus, Yakuts, Tunguses, Buriats and Mongols. These last are the survivals of the great Mongol race who once overspread nearly the whole of Russia's vast possessions in Asia and beyond, branches of their race extending as far south-east as Formosa, and as far north-west as Lapland and Finland. Those specimens of the northern Mongols or Mongol-Tartars that we meet along the route are broad-headed, flat-faced fellows, with yellow beardless faces, high cheek-bones, jet-black hair, small oblique eyes, and are, as a rule, short and thick set. In disposition the Mongols are rather lethargic and dull, and although their warlike instincts have not altogether disappeared, it is difficult to believe that they are the representatives of a race that at one time was the terror of the world. Very like these in appearance were a couple of Yakuts who were pointed out to me; this tribe occupies the Lena valley and

the banks of its tributaries right down to the Arctic Ocean. They number over 200,000, are laborious cultivators of the soil although they have terribly severe climatic conditions to struggle against. During the summer they live in birchbark conical tents, and in the winter in log cabins with plates of ice doing duty for glass in the windows. They are a singular exception to most of these northern tribes inasmuch as they are increasing in numbers; they take kindly to Russian civilisation and send their children



Buriats.

to the schools. Nominally they belong to the Orthodox Church, but in reality Shamanism is their religion. This creed, which pervades the whole north of the continent, teaches the existence of a Supreme Being, who carries on His government of the universe through innumerable secondary deities that the faithful have to keep propitiating by various rites, sacrifices and magic spells. Their idea of the future state is most gloomy, and ever fills them with fear and horror of death. In contrast to the Yakuts the Tunguses, who are a fearless race of hunters, dislike the Russians, refuse to take employment under them, will have nothing to say to agriculture, and spend their time in

chasing the reindeer and other animals, and make their livelihood out of the fur trade. They are rapidly diminishing in numbers, which is very much owing to the prevalence of contagious diseases amongst them, one of the penalties which they, amongst most barbarous nations, have to pay for being brought in contact with civilised nations.

At the stations approaching Lake Baikal and near Irkutsk, one sees a large number of the Buriats. They



Yakuts.

originally came from Mongolia, and in the thirteenth century were driven northwards into Siberia by Jenghis Khan, where they spread over what is now the province of Irkutsk. They vigorously opposed the invasion of the Russians in the sixteenth century, and for over thirty years were successful in stopping their advance. From being a warlike race of nomads they only took to agriculture at the end of the eighteenth century, but are now amongst the best farmers in Siberia, raising abundant crops from the luxuriant soil and irrigating their fields in a manner emulating the Chinese. The Russians have raised Cossack regiments from amongst them, and have

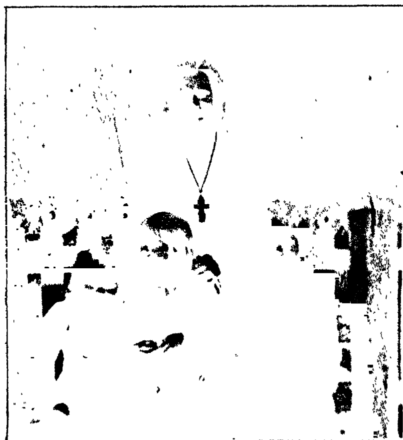
recently sent down some of these Buriat Cossacks into Mongolia, where, as they speak the same language as the inhabitants, they fraternise with them and are most useful to the Russians in furthering their plans for the quiet assimilation of that country.

Of the people one meets in the train the majority, if not military men, are at least in uniform, the engineering staff of the railway being distinguished by the badge of crossed pick-axe and shovel on their collars. I must say these military men one meets are particularly agreeable fellow-travellers, and even the highest in rank are delightfully frank and outspoken upon the political situation and the prospects of a possible war with Japan. "The heaven is high and the Czar is far away" is a Russian saying the significance of which one perceives in many directions. The motive power that moves things in the East comes from afar, and even those highest in authority do not originate things, but merely carry out ordinances as if they were obeying a law of nature, and seem to feel themselves free to comment on and criticise things the causation of which is no affair of theirs. Both the officers and officials are most helpful in enabling the stranger to see all there is to be seen in the country. Unquestionably travellers are watched by the secret police, but this espionage is carried on with the most absolute unobtrusiveness. It, however, exists all the same, and in the middle of Siberia I had an instance of it myself when I found that a high official, who had no knowledge of English, spoke to me about a book of mine, "The War of the Civilizations," in which I said some hard things about the conduct of the Russian troops in China, and about which I could not conceive how he had any information unless it was supplied by the police.

The treatment of Russian officers going on leave from Siberia is very different to that of our poor fellows in India, who get no reduction off the exorbitant fares charged by the P. and O. Company, notwithstanding the large subsidy

which it receives from the British government for carrying the mails. Numbers of English officers now returning from China are going by the Trans-Siberian route, as it is very much cheaper and shorter, and it seems extraordinary that, up to the time at which I am writing, no arrangements have yet been made for sending the English mails from China by this route.

The regular globe-trotters are already to be found travelling along the railway, even that type of wandering English spinster on whose face an east wind seems to be always blowing, with iron-grey hair and fringe of a darker shade, attired in sailor hat and golf cape whatever the weather, who sniffs suspiciously at the foreign food, and sees that she at all events gets good value for her money before she reluctantly extracts it from a bag suspended by a string from her neck. Ladies even whose appearance would not be such a protection to them as theirs is, however, may now travel alone in perfect security and comfort along the entire route.



A Russian Priest r.nd his Children.

Of people more or less curious of various nationalities and professions, including a quaint Russian priest and his young family, met on the journey, precedence must be given to one dubbed by his fellow-passengers "the professor." His appearance was striking, and never failed to attract the attention of the Russians when we stopped at the stations, or to excite the profound astonishment of the aborigines of Siberia. He had come, I believe, from

Burmah; he was rather above the middle height, but extremely gaunt, thin and angular. The most striking feature of his costume was a gigantic pith helmet which he constantly wore. In addition to ordinary glasses he had an immense pair of blue goggles, which he superimposed on them, that gave an expression of goblin-like ferocity similar to that given by motor-racing glasses. He was clad generally in a suit of loose light drab silk, the trousers of which fell short by about an inch of the tops of his yellow boots, or appeared in a golf suit with red jacket, and stockings which drew attention to the total absence of calves. He had golf sticks, fishing-rods and a gun amongst his luggage. He did not know Russian, but was an industrious student of a vocabulary and never missed an opportunity of practising on the inhabitants. It was interesting to see him visored in the large glasses, and with phrase-book held somewhat like a revolver, let off a sentence at some astonished native. He had hygienic theories about air and exercise. He wished to have the windows of his compartment always open, but a stout and fiery old Russian officer who shared the compartment with him, and who slept in his clothes, would have nothing of the kind. As a result the moment the latter left the compartment the professor would open the window, andthen mounting on the seat, might be seen waving a wet towel backwards and forwards, as he explained to change the air. He was equally keen on taking exercise, and used to run a mile and a half every day. This he managed to do by getting out at stations and running up and down the platform until the train began to move again, while the natives looked on in solemn and mystified wonderment. The Russians that one is thrown in contact with make the most charming travelling companions, and apparently seem to have a sense of personal obligation to the stranger to do the utmost in acts of courtesy by giving information about the places of interest passed through, acting as interpreter and

so forth. They are great people for shaking hands, which goes on all round the last thing at night and the first thing in the morning. One cannot but pity the young officers one meets, jolly pleasant fellows, who, with their regiments stationed in Siberia, are condemned to a dreary exile there. There is plenty of shooting, in fact so much as to be surfeitingly monotonous, and there are practically no girls of their class in Siberia, so for amusement what is there to do but—drink? And they *can* drink—beer, wine, vodka and champagne, this last much sweeter than we like it in America or England. The average Russian must put away an enormous amount of liquid during the day, but the bulk of it is in the form of tea, sugar and lemon without milk, a beverage that the visitor soon acquires a taste for.

Another fellow-traveller who excited a considerable amount of interest amongst the natives at the towns in which he stopped was known as "the fishman," a scientist who was making a collection of Siberian fish for an American university. Early in the morning he used to visit the fish markets, and returned with a varied assortment of all kinds of fishes. He must have mystified the dealers, who used to try to sell him good, eatable fish, which he refused for all sorts of weird specimens. These he would take to his room and pack in kerosene tins containing a solution of formaline. The servants being surprised at their disappearance, I explained to one of them that he belonged to a tribe of American citizens that lived on raw fish, which caused her to cross herself with much unction. The subject of eating reminds me of our missionary and the sausage. The missionary was a young Anglican clergyman, mild mannered and shy, with hock-bottled shoulders and light straw-coloured hair. One day the professor had been holding forth to him on the wholesomeness of the Russian sausage as an article of diet, and finally led him off at a station to one of the stalls where the emigrants were in the habit of buying supplies. With the

help of the vocabulary the purchase was made, and the missionary returned carrying one of the most formidable high-power sausages I have ever seen. All went well, and I had forgotten about it until night time, when I went to my compartment to turn in. The weather was close and hot. Noticing a most extraordinary odour, I thought it came from the engine, which was burning oil, but on closing the window it became still worse. As I lay awake speculating as to what it might be it struck me that the formaline solution might have leaked off "the fishman's" specimens. I went to his compartment, but he said they were all in the luggage van behind. On my way I passed the professor pacing the corridor, arrayed in a light and elegant costume, consisting of a Japanese kimona, pith helmet and slippers. I asked him if the fat Russian had gone to bed yet. He replied rather testily that he wished he had, but was still sitting up in the smoking-room drinking a quantity of beer that would cause him to snore worse than ever. As I proceeded towards the end of the carriage the scent became stronger, and I was brought, so to speak, to a dead set opposite the door of the reverend missionary's compartment. In answer to my knock a weak and hollow voice said, "Come in, please." He was sitting on the bed in jæger flannel shirt and trousers. His auburn hair was dishevelled, and the clerical dicky which he wore was twisted over one shoulder. He leant his chin upon one hand; from the other, which hung down, his celluloid cuff had dropped upon the floor. On the seat opposite lay the sausage. The scene reminded me of the picture of Cromwell contemplating the body of Charles the First. Asking me to close the door, he confided to me the trouble he was in owing to the "unpleasant odour" that emanated from the sausage. A feeling of delicacy prevented me from suggesting that he should throw it away, as he had possibly sunk too much capital in its purchase to allow of his doing so. He explained that he had hung it out of the

window, but that only resulted in attracting all the dogs from near the stations at which we stopped, who howled at their ineffectual efforts to get at it. He had also tried burying it under the mattress, without any perceptible result. After considering what could be done with it, I recollected that there was a glass-doored box covering some electrical machinery and the switch handles of the lights at the end of the passage, and suggested to him that he might deposit it there and shut the door on it. After some persuasion he went out with it, and returned in a few minutes obviously relieved. Sitting down, he had hardly finished thanking me for my suggestion when suddenly all the lights in the carriage went out. I went to the box and removed the thing just before the *chef de train* came along to find out what was the matter with the electric light. Determined that we must find some other way, I bethought me of the tin cover of my typewriting machine. I brought it along, but the sausage was too long. However, by cutting it in two we managed to hide it under this. The expedient was quite successful, but it has given a strong smell of sausage to my typewriting machine, and I fancy I have in consequence since seen editors sniff suspiciously at MSS. I have offered them.

CHAPTER XV

FROM IRKUTSK TO TOMSK

LEAVING IRKUTSK—THE MONASTERY OF THE ASCENSION—KRASNOYARSK, A CROSSROAD ON THE PATH OF EMPIRE—THE GOLDFIELDS OF THE UPPER YENISEI—THE COAL-FIELDS—THE STEAMER TRAFFIC—MAMMOTHS—ATCHINSK—BOYCOTTED TOMSK: ITS UNIVERSITY, THE MUNIFICENCE OF ITS BENEFACTORS, THE MULTITUDINOUS CHARITIES, INSTITUTIONS, CLUBS

LEAVING Irkutsk, the great monastery of the Ascension is passed four versts from the town. It was founded in 1672 and is now one of the richest in Siberia; it has six churches, in one of which is a silver shrine containing the relics of St Innocent, who was the first Bishop of Irkutsk. He was sent on an ecclesiastical mission to Pekin, died in 1731, and is considered the first miracle-worker of Siberia.

Skirting the river Angara, the station of Talma is reached; here may be seen a cloth factory which was started by the State in the eighteenth century, at a time when private enterprise would not venture so far afield. There are also glass-works which have been operated for over 150 years, and a large vodka distillery. It is curious the way that one comes across factories like these in the most unexpected places. A short distance farther along the line, for instance, is found a seam of fireclay equal to the best Belgian deposits, for the working of which an Irkutsk merchant named Perevalov established a factory, and it is now in the hands of a company who

produce excellent china, earthenware, glass and pottery to the annual value of over 400,000 roubles. This is only one of the many examples how the natural resources may be developed when the country becomes more thickly populated. Farther on by Zima and Kuiton the great Siberian highway runs along close to the railway, which sooner or later will carry the immense quantity of tea one now sees being transported on the backs of long strings of camels or in clumsy wooden carts drawn by bullocks. The total import of tea from China into the Russian Empire is 90,000,000 lbs., out of which 61,000,000 comes from the Asiatic frontier and is carried in these carts or on camels along the highway. The greater portion of it passes through Kiakhta after crossing the Gobi Desert, so that when the Mongolian railway is in working order for carrying goods it will have this immense traffic awaiting it, and tea can be sent from the Great Wall of China direct to Moscow by rail. The flavour of tea is unquestionably impaired by a sea voyage, even when packed in lead-lined chests, and the delicacy of flavour of Chinese tea is best retained when sent by the overland route.

As we approach Kansk, which, with the exception of Atchinsk, is the most northern point touched by the Siberian railway, the line runs through an immense coalfield for a distance of ninety-five miles, which has been proved but is not yet worked. Just think what this will mean for the district when there is time and population sufficient for developing it! Immediately outside the station of Kansk the line passes over a steel trestle bridge of three spans of forty sazhens each. The town, like so many others from this on, is some distance from the station, but it is not of much importance as it owes its existence principally to being merely a stopping-place on the great Siberian railway, and its only trade is in compressed hay, which is sent to Irkutsk by rail and can be got for the reaping on the wide tracks of luxuriant prairie around. Across the

Yenisei at the town of Krasnoyarsk is one of the finest bridges on the railway; its length is 434 sazhens in six spans and two small spans on each shore; there is a roadway for vehicular traffic as well as the railway track. This immense work was designed and carried out by Russian engineers and the metal-work made exclusively in Russian factories. The piers are founded on pneumatic caissons, the depth of the foundations for the river piers being eight and a half sazhens. There was one advantage which the engineers had during its construction, which was that the blocks of granite obtained from a village close by and all other materials could be carried across the thick ice on the surface of the river during the winter.

The station of Krasnoyarsk at the other side of the bridge is an important one; it is surrounded by large workshops where 2000 men are employed in railway fitting, waggon-making, and repairing locomotives, the power for all the machinery being supplied by electric motors. There are also store-houses containing a vast quantity of railway material and supplies. Close to these is a railway technical school, the first that was established in Siberia. This is a great distributing station for emigrants for the Minusinsk and Krasnoyarsk districts. There is a large feeding depot that can accommodate a number of emigrants while waiting for the steamers of the government to take them to the lands allotted to them.

The town is well laid out and the streets are wide, but there is no attempt whatever at paving, and the day I was there they were about a foot deep in dust. About the middle of the last century it was a more important gold-mining centre than it is at present, and large fortunes were made by many of the miners; and we hear of them subscribing to build a great cathedral which, however, collapsed when nearly completed, and then one gold miner, Shchegoloiv by name, came forward, rebuilt and ornamented it at a total cost of half a million roubles. Krasnoyarsk is likely to

develop into an important city. The Yenisei, which flows through it, is navigable a short distance from its source the whole way to the Arctic Ocean. Around Minusinsk its basin is rich with gold-mines, copper and iron ores, and large coal deposits. The river is closed from October to April, but for the rest of the year a fleet of about thirty steamers have more goods offered than they can handle. With such natural advantages as this city possesses it will be curious to watch to what size it will have grown in the next quarter of a century.

The basin of the Yenisei River is almost the largest in the world; in its length the river falls a little short of the Missouri and Mississippi together, while the area drained by it is estimated at 1,380,000 square miles, while that of the Missouri and Mississippi is only 1,250,000. On its upper portion near Minusinsk is a district surrounded by mountains with a dry climate where the temperature for the greater part of the year resembles that of Italy. It is a veritable oasis compared with the rest of Siberia, as it has also been a veritable El Dorado, owing to the alluvial gold which has been washed down from the surrounding mountains. An American miner who joined the train at Krasnoyarsk told me that there was little difference between it and the Pacific Slope in San Francisco. He said that as far as his own mining was concerned it was only the alluvial deposits which were being worked, but that the source from which the gold came was worked to a very small extent, and the country had been very incompletely prospected. The rich copper deposits are almost entirely neglected, but near the iron-mines, which have been worked for the last half century, were the remains of old workings which scientists said dated from prehistoric times. In no part of the world can the history of man be traced by bronze and iron implements with anything like the completeness of detail which the collections of the museums at Minusinsk, Krasnoyarsk and Yeniseisk supply. Several attempts have

been made to establish a regular trading route between Central Siberia and Europe *viâ* Yenisei and the Kara Sea. In 1896 Captain Wiggins, an Englishman, ascended the river several hundred miles as far as where the Eureika flows into it, and was then frozen in for the winter. In the following year a rich and enterprising Siberian named Sideroff had a vessel built at Yeniseisk which he navigated right round to St Petersburg, and in the same year another vessel arrived at the mouth of the Yenisei from Russia. It was in 1878 Nordenskjold organised his celebrated expedition to explore the northern coast of Siberia, and out of his fleet of four vessels, two of them, the *Fraser* and the *Express*, ascended the Yenisei. In the year following, a cargo of tea was despatched from London to the ports in the interior of Siberia, and great hopes were entertained that lines of steamers might be profitably started for direct trading with Europe, and a company was formed to send supplies and machinery, for the construction of the railway, from England up the Yenisei. The ice in the Kara Sea, which is frequently frozen over during the entire year, together with the difficulty, uncertainty and danger of navigating the river, offered so many obstacles that it was found such a route could not be worked profitably, and after a Russian ice-breaker which was sent to open a passage where the river flows into the Kara Sea was obliged to turn back, the attempt to run a permanent line of steamers was finally abandoned. It is evident, therefore, that the commerce of the entire district of the Yenisei basin as far as foreign countries are concerned will have to depend entirely upon the railways, and I don't think that it will be long before it will be found necessary to duplicate the single track of the main line throughout its entire length.

Of the great water-courses of the world which have shaped the lives of men, such as the Nile, the Danube and the Rhine, this, a larger river than them all, will yet have

its day in history, and the signs of the coming of this day are everywhere apparent.

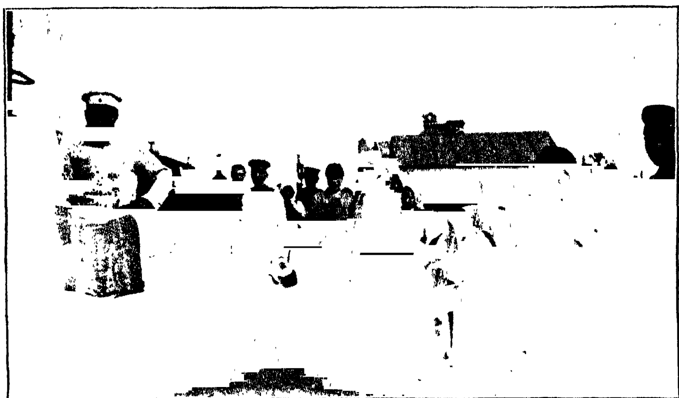
The earliest history of this region, as told to us by geologists, is full of stimulating interest. There is convincing evidence that the climate of the northern portion especially has deteriorated. The great change that has taken place is proved by the thousands of mammoths and rhinoceroses whose remains are found within the Arctic Circle. Where these were to be found in the greatest abundance was in the New Siberian Islands, so much so that a very paying industry has been carried on there in the collection of mammoth tusks. Sannikof, who was the first to explore them thoroughly in 1810, in addition to large quantities of ivory, found the skeletons of horses, buffaloes and sheep, so that it was quite evident that whole herds of graminivora had inhabited them. Between Yeniseisk and Yakutsk, far in the interior, Stadling found the skeleton of a mammoth in soil about seven feet thick, which rested on pure ice of unknown depth that took the place of rock. The food found in his stomach was composed of twigs of trees similar to those which are now to be found in that region. Some of the bones were split with stone instruments in the usual way employed for the extraction of the marrow, and the finding of these implements in close proximity to the skeleton pointed to the existence of man at the same epoch. The mammoth is supposed to have come from southern Asia, and to be naturally a denizen of warm or temperate climates; but in northern Siberia, from specimens found in an excellent state of preservation, he was there seen to have developed a coat with thick matted hair or wool next the skin and longer hair outside. Fortified, however, even with such covering would not account for his being able to live in the climate as it is at present. The great climatic change is accounted for by the theory that in recent times, corresponding possibly to the Flood, of which we have the

biblical account, there was a great subsidence in central Asia, extending westward from the Yenisei basin to the Ural Mountains, and the inland sea thus created, larger than the Mediterranean, increased the moisture of the atmosphere and raised the entire temperature of that part of the continent. According to this theory the animals whose remains are found in such abundance lived on the higher grounds, and at the termination of the period of subsidence became extinct owing to the severity of the cold which ensued. According to Dr Wright, "there was no such extension of ice from the Asiatic glacial centres during the Glacial Period as there was from the centres of north-western Europe and northern North America." Evidence of recent changes of level over this whole area is found in the alluvial deposits which cover all the inland plain stretching everywhere from the Arctic Ocean for a considerable distance south, completely enveloping the entire basin contained between the Yenisei River and the Ural Mountains, and extending over the whole Aral-Caspian depression. The region affected by this depression includes an area of not less than 3,000,000 square miles, and was depressed—in some portions, at any rate—to the extent of 3000 feet. It was during this submergence that the fertile soil of the vast prairies of western Siberia and the terraces and deltas of loess around the southern and eastern borders of Turkestan were accumulated, together with the great loess-covered areas which furnish the richest wheat-fields of southern Russia. It is to the existence of this loess, or rich black earth, to which I have so often referred, that the repopulation of Siberia will be due. I use the term repopulation advisedly, as it is of historic knowledge that for centuries after the Christian era it had many times the population that it has at present. While its inhabitants then were mainly nomadic, the Russian peasants now emigrating in such large numbers will till and cultivate the soil, which in part is capable of supporting as dense

a population even as China. The development of agricultural industry will assist the development of the mines and coalfields, and their exploitation will react by making a local market for agricultural produce.

Leaving the town of Krasnoyarsk the line enters a mountainous country, which is extremely picturesque, and gradually ascends, winding along by the bank of the river Chulym after crossing it by a bridge. It then enters the fertile region surrounding the town of Atchinsk, which is already yielding quantities of grain that is being exported to the East by the Siberian railway and by the waterways of the Chulym and Ob to Tiumen, and thence to the European markets. The town of Atchinsk very much resembles Krasnoyarsk in the advantages of its position. Like it, it is a great distributing station for settlers, has a medical and feeding-station and a branch line to the landing-place on the river, from which they are taken inland. The town is increasing rapidly since the completion of the railway, and, like Krasnoyarsk, the great Siberian highway passes through it. Marinsk, which is the next town of importance reached, is situated on the left bank of the Kiya, which is crossed by a fine steel trestle bridge of four spans. It is close to the gold-mines, which probably accounts for the fact that Jews form a considerable proportion of the population. From this on, the line passes through an almost level country covered with a dense virgin forest of pine and birch. Passing through mile after mile, one exactly like the next, trackless and without any sign beyond the course of the railway of having been traversed by man, it looks as easy a place to get lost or bushed as in the forest deserts of Australia. This is the class of country which surrounds the station of Taiga, from which a line branches off to Tomsk. It is difficult to understand why Tomsk was boycotted by the railway, because, as far as population is concerned (52,430 according to the census of 1897), it is the first town in Siberia.

The story I heard about the said boycotting had it that it was intimated to the inhabitants that they would have to pay if the railway was to be brought to the city, and they declined to be thus blackmailed by the engineers. Be this as it may, as result the latter passed them by, running the line at a distance of fifty miles, giving the excuse that there were great engineering difficulties in the way. These difficulties are, however, not very apparent as one travels along the branch line, and this even does not run right in,



At Taiga Station.

but skirts the city at a distance of two miles, with a station at the nearer and farther side, as if the engineers, when finally compelled to build the line, had said that they would make it as inconvenient as possible to the tight-fisted inhabitants. The inside history of the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway would no doubt be interesting if any one could only get at the facts. The settlement at the junction, where there are a dozen tracks side by side and some workshops, is fast increasing to a small town. While waiting for the train the time can be spent in the large refreshment-room, experimenting with the different sacouskas, more substantial dishes, or studying local colour

in the variety of people crowding it. To me this latter was an endless source of interest throughout the journey when stopping at the frequent stations that afforded little else to amuse one.

A journey of close on four hours brings one to Tomsk, and a jolting droski drive deposits you at the European hotel. The roads were atrociously bad, and it is only when driving over them one sees what good reason or excuse there is for the man to hold on firmly to the lady he is driving with. It is a custom of the country that I have seen some of my fellow-travellers adopt with an altogether exceptional facility. Tomsk, like every other big Siberian town, is a surprise to the stranger. It is full of incongruities. Brilliant electric light illuminates streets that are morasses of mud or ankle deep in dust. There is a club with handsome pillared front, whose members can probably account for more empty bottles, especially gold-topped ones, than the members of any club in London.

The most remarkable thing in Tomsk, however, is the Imperial University, founded in 1880, the only one in the whole of Asiatic Russia. It is a handsome, solidly built structure surrounded by tastefully laid out grounds, considerably too large for the present number of its occupants, but like many similar institutions ample margin is allowed for the growth of the country. At first it only possessed the faculty of medicine, which for ten years averaged about a thousand students ; the majority of these were the sons of political exiles, men of culture and education, who were glad to avail themselves of this chance which opened a career more suited to their tastes than farming, mining or trading. Besides providing the country with a body of well-qualified young physicians, it naturally exercised a far-spread and most civilising effect upon Siberia, and established an intellectual rallying centre for the interchange of ideas amongst the quite large number of men, scientists and explorers, who are scattered throughout Siberia. From it numerous

scientific expeditions were fitted out for the exploration of the north Asiatic continent, and the results of their researches have obtained world-wide recognition. The Botanical, and more especially the Zoological Museum, have most beautiful and complete collections from the polar regions, amongst which may be seen those made by Nordenskjold in his voyages in the *Vega*. The Mineralogical and Geological Museum is also very complete and of much practical utility. The Archæological and Ethnographical were started by Florinsky, one of the founders of the university; there is a fine collection of Tobolsk antiquities excavated from kurgans composed of objects dating from prehistoric times. All these collections have been enriched, and are being added to from time to time by the gifts of wealthy and generous Russians. There is an admirable munificence about the Siberian millionaires, especially amongst those who have made their fortunes rapidly in mining, which generally takes the form of building or endowing churches, but which here in Tomsk has been drawn into a scientific channel. A gift by Count Stroganov of a valuable collection of books, engravings and scientific sketches, was the nucleus of the present library, which numbers over 100,000 volumes. Prince Golitsyn, the poet Zhukovsky, the heirs of Count Litke followed his example, and presents of private libraries belonging to celebrated men such as Professor Gneist of Berlin (10,000 volumes), Count Valoev, former Minister of the Interior (9000 volumes), and many others were added. The faculty of law was established in 1898, when also a large chemical laboratory was built. The munificence of these wealthy Russians to which I have referred is evidenced by the donations they have given for the establishment of scholarships in the university, which amount at present to over 4,000,000 roubles. A Technological Institute is now being founded which will be of great practical usefulness in connection with the numerous

industries new to the country which are being started in every direction. There are numerous charitable institutions under the direction of a charity board: a fine hospital, a poor house, lunatic asylum, a children's home that owes its foundation to a gold miner named Astashoy, an orphanage, Orthodox missionary and charitable societies, a *crèche*, a night shelter, a society for providing cheap dinners are some only of the numerous institutions of this remarkable city. There is also an institution for impecunious pupils of the Tomsk Ecclesiastical Seminary, and a society for the relief of students of the Tomsk University. As the writer referred to the population of America as "mostly generals," so one might say of the buildings in Tomsk that the houses are "mostly institutions," charitable or educational. But the institutions do not appear to be half as numerous as the societies of one kind or another: there is a Red Cross Society, an Imperial Russian Humane Society, a Clerks' Mutual Aid Society, Naturalists' and Doctors' Society, Roman Catholic Charitable Society, Agricultural and Commercial School Society, Mutual Aid Society for Women, Imperial Russian Musical Society, Sportsmen's, Horticultural, Tomsk Co-operative Supply, and Railway Co-operative Supply Societies; a Volunteer Fire Brigade, a Racing Society, with a Jockey Club and race-course of its own, a West Siberian Agricultural Society, a Society for the Promotion of Physical Development, which has built public baths, and sends weak children on summer excursions; there is a large Working-Men's Club, and it may be said that there is a society for the prehistoric inhabitants of Siberia, for its work is devoted to a study of them and their habits of life from an anthropological standpoint. Surely this is an array sufficient for the wants of a population which would be represented by a couple of noughts added to the present figure.

CHAPTER XVI

THE EXPRESS

IS IT COMFORTABLE?—THE FOOD—RUSSIAN APPETITES—THE "CHEF DE TRAIN"—HIEROGLYPHIC ORDERINGS—VODKA AS AN APERATIF—THE WAGON-LITS—A RUBBER OF BRIDGE—HOW TO STOP A RUSSIAN EXPRESS—PICTURE POST-CARDISM—THE BUILDING OF THE RAILWAY—ITS COST—ITS EARNING POWER—ITS INCREASING TRAFFIC

ONE of the first questions that one is asked after making this journey across the Trans-Siberian route, is, "Was it not very rough and uncomfortable travelling?" There are all sorts of stories going of the delays, difficulties and discomforts which are supposed to be attached to the journey. There was certainly very good foundation for them up to this year, before the express service was started: but now all this is changed. With an experience of having crossed North America by five different routes, and travelling over a great part of Australia by rail, as well as making long journeys in Europe, as, for instance, from Calais to Naples and Moscow to Paris, I must say I consider the Trans-Siberian Railway journey quite as comfortable in every way as any of the best trains in the world. I was told that the worst part of the journey would be that by the Chinese Eastern Railway from Dalny to Lake Baikal, but, on the contrary, this is the best portion of all. The cars are quite new, and in their construction are better, more roomy, and more comfortable than any others I know of. Our particular express was made up of six cars. A

luggage-van, with sleeping compartments for the servants, composed the first car. Then came the dining-car, capable of seating over forty people at tables with seats for four. This was divided across by a swing-door to separate the smokers from the non-smokers, both male and female. The greatest smoker on our trip, by the way, was a jolly-faced, stout old Russian lady, who, morning, noon or night was never without her cigarette. The third and fourth cars were entirely second-class, the fifth a first-class, but this was reserved for M. Isvolski, the Russian minister to Japan, who was returning home with his wife and family.

A wide passage ran through the train on the right-hand side of the cars, off which the doors of the compartments opened. The second-class carriages all accommodate four people, two on each side transversely. The first-class compartments are for two people as a rule, with a few for four. By a neat arrangement of folding-doors the intervening partition between two compartments can be opened if desired. If the train is not crowded, so that only two persons occupy a second-class compartment, they are much better off than in a first for two, as there is nearly twice as much room, and each passenger can have a lower berth instead of one having to go "top-side." As regards the comparative comfort of the two there is really hardly any difference except in the colour of the upholstery, in the one having rosewood doors instead of the polished pine of the other. The cars are loftier even than those in America, and the racks are so arranged in the top of the compartments and in the passage outside, that a great quantity of luggage can be conveniently stored. Everything like suit-cases, portmanteaux, and in fact small trunks can easily be stored away in the carriage. The allowance of luggage to each person to be carried in the express luggage-van is only ten pounds, and two large trunks between Dalny and Moscow would cost you about £5. I think it is a



Eastern Express Dining-Car.

truly admirable idea to put this tax on people who go travelling with ridiculously superfluous luggage.

Most thoughtful attention has been paid to details in the construction of the carriages. There is no gilding or gaudy ornamentation, but everything is strong and serviceable. There is a solid folding-table for writing on in each compartment; the locks of the doors open smoothly with plain lever handles, and if they swing right back they are held by a catch. The passages between the carriages, which are kept close together, have a better overlapping floor system than I have ever seen elsewhere. The cars are well ventilated from below as well as from above. Of the heating apparatus I had no means of judging, but the arrangement of the cars into compartments would allow the occupants of each to regulate the temperature for themselves. The beds are comfortable, and fresh linen sheets are put on every other day. The upper berth folds flat against the wall during the daytime. There are two roomy lavatories at the end of each car, with large basins and a plentiful supply of hot and cold water, and an arrangement for giving your head a shower-bath, which may be found grateful and comforting if one should happen to have been sitting up late the night before with convivially hospitable Russian officers.

The lighting is not of that parsimonious character to which we are accustomed on the English railways, that is just sufficient to make darkness visible, and which strains the eyes when reading or writing. It was sufficiently brilliant to enable one to read in comfort in any corner of the compartments. There are double windows throughout the train, and the ventilation in the roof is so good, the incoming air being passed over ice in the summer, that it is seldom necessary to open them. Dust is one of the chief discomforts of long railway journeys, such for instance as that of the alkali plains in the United States, or throughout most parts of Australia, which penetrates every-

where, covers everything, and makes one feel gritty all over. We were never troubled with dust in Manchuria or Siberia, and not until going through Germany, when there were a couple of days that were as bad as could well be.

It is in the matter of the officials that the train contrasts most favourably with the American lines. The *chef de train* occupies the position of a host at a well-managed hotel. He takes a personal interest in the comfort and welfare of each of his guests, and acts as interpreter to those who do not understand Russian. He is an encyclopædia of information about the route, and is always untiringly attentive and obliging, making suggestions on his own initiative for your more thorough enjoyment of the trip. There are two attendants on each car, who make the beds, keep the compartments spotlessly clean, and answer the electric bell at any time of the day or night. Of the two in our car, one was a fine specimen of a Russian, who, from his carriage and bearing, had evidently gone through more than the compulsory period in the army. The other was younger, and both were willing, good-natured fellows, most anxious to oblige. Although they only spoke Russian, they were quick at interpreting very broken language, or the pantomimic gestures that had so often to take its place.

The line is much better laid and ballasted than I expected from what I had heard, and it is being still further improved. One can write in comfort and shave in safety while the train is in motion. When you wash, the water does not go swishing over the sides of the basin, and when going down the train or through the passages between the cars you are not knocked from side to side. Among the few things that might have been arranged better are the windows. They might well have been larger, both in the compartments and corridors. There is only one window in each compartment, and this is not large enough to give an extended view unless one is close up to

the glass. The carriages are built of steel, heavier and apparently stronger than American cars of equal size, but it seems a great pity that they have not, except in the dining car, the bright effect that larger windows would give them.

During a journey of such length the restaurant department becomes naturally an important feature, and one sits down to the first meal with a considerable amount of interested curiosity. There is nothing, however, to cause apprehension on this line. The food was most excellent and extremely well cooked. We had a large number of passengers on our train, and this being hitherto quite unusual, was given as an excuse for the considerable slowness there was in the service. Breakfast is *à la carte*. The bread and fresh butter were very good, and all the foreigners seemed to take kindly to the Russian tea, served in glasses with lemon and sugar. The principal meal of the day could be had any time between one and five. It consisted of four courses: soup—the Russian borsch, with vegetables and large slices of meat, which to a person of small appetite would suffice for a meal in itself—then two courses of meat, beefsteak being usually one, and some sort of fowl or cutlets and sweets or ices followed by tea or coffee. One rouble, equal to two shillings, was all they charged for this meal. This rate of charges, however, was only as far as the frontier town of Manchuria; after that the price was raised to one rouble and a quarter without tea or coffee.

The duty was the excuse for raising prices all round about twenty-five per cent. more; for instance, a bottle of soda-water cost twenty kopeks at one side of the station, and thirty at the other, and so on. There were only two waiters, who though both hardworking and willing, were not sufficient to do the work, especially as many of the passengers took their meals in their compartments, and kept them going backwards and forwards the whole length

of the train. They were not particularly bright or intelligent, and they spoke only Russian, which did not improve matters. The menu of the chief meal was written in Russian, which had the result of involving an English gentleman of large appetite in a dispute one day owing to his pointing to the date, and wanting to insist on the waiter bringing it to him. The *à la carte* menu was printed in Russian and French, but in the train that preceded ours I heard a pathetic story of a party of Americans to whom it was little help, as none of them knew French. The *chef de train* was very obliging as an interpreter but was not always available; one morning, finding that boiled eggs were not on the menu, I had to fall back on drawing an egg in an egg-cup to explain what I wanted; like in a Japanese restaurant one day, having forgotten the word for rice, I had to make an elaborate picture of a man in a rice field, which they understood, and brought the rice to me immediately. It is not surprising that Russian food and cooking is good, because they are certainly great eaters. I have never seen anything like the performances of some of our fellow-passengers, men, women and children. I don't know whether it is because they are so big that they require to eat so much, or because they eat so much that they are so big. Some of them, one family in particular—the fat, jolly-faced Russian lady was of the party—spent nearly all day in the dining car; when they were not eating they were drinking tea or beer, and then before meals always a glass or two of voka with a sakouska of caviar. I always make it a practice when travelling to do as Rome does, drink the wine and eat the food of the country, or anyhow give it a fair trial. I find as a rule there is something in both which suits the climate, life and surroundings particularly well. I like the Japanese cooking very much, especially their hot tea and warm saké. I thought the national dish, poi, in Honolulu simply delicious. While in America iced water seems an absolute necessity

with every meal, and somehow in Russia their habit of taking a glass of vodka and a sakouska before meals, which seems so strange, one discovers to be just all right—it touches the spot, and is to be strongly recommended before sitting down to a Russian dinner.

I would strongly advise those going through from Dalny to Moscow to go by the Wagon-Lits train, even if from Irkutsk it did not connect, and that it necessitated waiting a day or two. It is worth waiting for, and two or three days can be put in very well at Irkutsk and its neighbourhood, seeing something of Siberian town life. One gets any amount of advice given gratuitously to the contrary from various officials and others, but this should be disregarded. The Russian cars are well enough for short journeys if one wishes to get off and wait occasionally *en route*, but when going right through, and especially for ladies, it is certainly preferable to go by the Wagon-Lits train. The first thing that strikes one about the cars in comparison with the other two trains is that they are brighter and more lightsome owing to the much larger windows. The cars are about the same length but not so high, there is therefore not the same space for stowing luggage overhead, and in a crowded train there would be more probability of having to put part of one's luggage in the luggage-van at very high charge. The first-class compartments for two are considerably wider than those on the Eastern Chinese Railway, and have the berths arranged differently, the lower one across the carriage and the upper along the windows. There is a small table at the window and an arm-chair at the opposite side of it from the long seat. This latter makes a nice addition, as one can sit facing or with one's back to the engine at will, whereas in the other train the seats in the first-class compartments face only one way. Between every two compartments is a lavatory, which prevents the necessity of going along the passage to wash in the mornings. Our train not having connected with the

express, had few passengers. It consisted of one second and two first-class carriages, a dining car and luggage van. The dining car is divided in two, one half being capable of seating twenty-four people at meals at a time, and the other half being used as a smoking-room. There were several illustrated papers in this latter, and also a variety of boxes of games. The cars, though not so steady as the Eastern China Railway, were much better than the Russian line, and quite comfortable to write in. The servants on this train are particularly attentive and obliging, and they all talk either French or German besides Russian, which makes everything so much easier, as in the other trains it was a continual pantomime to extremely dull servants. A *table-d'hôte* lunch is served every day at twelve for one rouble, and dinner at six for one rouble twenty-five kopecks, consisting of soup, fish, meat and sweets. The third day after leaving Irkutsk the weather suddenly turned very wet and cold, some flakes of snow even mingling with the rain, although it was the 27th of May, but the steam heat being turned on the cars were made quite comfortable.

In my opinion, and in the opinion of people I have met who have made the trip, it is infinitely more enjoyable, and the time passes much more quickly than on a calm sea voyage. The time seemed far shorter than in crossing the Atlantic. Every day there was a certain variety of detail in the foreground of pictures painted in broad strokes that had a tendency towards monotony. The life on board the train was capable of being arranged to suit various tastes. Nearly every one assembled twice a day in the dining car where passengers met each other, and the polite and courteous Russians were always on the look-out to be of service to foreigners in their struggles with the language, although, judging from my own experience, I think the Russians have a reputation as linguists which they don't altogether deserve. There were always some men to be found in the smoking-room if one felt sociably inclined, and

there was equally the fortress of one's own compartment to fall back upon if one wished to be alone. Just as on board ship we were not twelve hours started before the inevitable man was encountered who was looking for a game of bridge; then there were the frequent stoppages, when one had time to stretch one's legs on the platform or go for a short walk or drive. These longer stops were, however, confined to the earlier days of the journey, after that there was seldom time to leave the station. Of course the time of this whole journey can be considerably shortened, even without accelerating the speed of the trains, by curtailing the time that is spent dawdling around unimportant stations. Every time the engine takes on water it is detached from the train, and goes on about one hundred yards to where the water tower is situated; this saves a lot of backing and jolting in getting the engine with train attached right into position, but it also wastes a lot of time. There is a total absence of unseemly hurry however, everything is done deliberately; I have never seen a railway porter move quicker than a walk, and never saw a Russian running to catch a train. When starting, the bell hung over the station-house door is first rung twice, then in about a minute's time rung three times, when the guard blows his whistle, the engine whistles in answer, and the train starts; if you are left behind you can hardly plead that you have not had sufficient warning. This nearly happened to me, however, at the station of Boukhedou in Manchuria. The *chef de train* told me that we would wait for the full thirty-eight minutes marked in the time-table, although we were a little late, so off I went with my camera to take a photo of the picturesque little town. I was followed from the station by a soldier, who pounced on me the moment I opened my camera, and told me that photographing was not allowed, so I returned along the line towards the station. Although only twenty minutes had passed, I saw the train begin to move when I was

about two hundred yards in front of it; in order to stop it I laid down on the track. The engine-driver not being prepared to commit manslaughter, stopped the train. They are really humane and good natured these Russians.

The traveller should be sure to provide himself with an ample supply of literature, as there are none but Russian books to be got on the train, and at the stations none but Russian papers until nearing Europe; then French and English newspapers are to be seen on the stalls, where one can get a *Daily Mail* or *Express* for sixpence, or a copy of the *Times* with portions of it carefully blacked out by the censor. One naturally took more interest in these passages, but so carefully were they done that it took considerable time and careful treatment with hot water to make them out. Any one infected with the picture post-card craze will have ample opportunity of indulging himself all along the route.

The mails are not carried by the express, but by a mail train that passes every day; this is made up of first, second and third-class carriages. There is another train of second, third and fourth-class and goods waggons, the bulk of whose passengers are state-aided settlers and emigrants. The fourth-class carriages are simply goods waggons fitted with a stove in the centre, and benches for the people to sleep on. Printed on the outside is the notice that their carrying capacity for military purposes is forty men or eight horses each. All the carriages, even the fourth-class, are kept clean, and in the express the seats of the carriages were covered with striped galatia, a material that could be easily washed.

It was decided to test the railway system this year, and 120,000 troops were sent eastward across the railway with all possible speed, such as would be used in case of an outbreak of war in the East.

It is only this year that the railway can be considered

completed, in the fullest sense of the word, with a service of trains running regularly that can be depended on over a track that is now well ballasted, and not subject to constant washouts and landslips as heretofore.

The Czar, in his first address to the railway committee, of which he was president, said, "I contemplate with emotion the grandeur of the task before us," and spoke of "the love of my country" and the ardent desire of its welfare that prompted his exertions. The contemplation of the completion of the task—the greatest railway enterprise the world has yet seen, cannot fail to be more deeply gratifying to him than the most victorious campaign, and must be a source of just pride to every Russian.

It was an Englishman who first put forward the idea of building a Trans-Siberian railway, and offers were afterwards made by Americans for its construction. These men spent much time in urging their projects on the government, but without success, as very naturally it wished to have the construction in Russian hands. In 1875 a committee of ministers considered the rival claims of three routes, and selected one which, on the 19th of December, received the sanction of the Emperor. From various causes—the want of readily available funds, political complications, and the war in the East in 1887—its commencement was postponed. The entire line was divided into seven sections, on which work was commenced almost simultaneously. On May the 19th 1891, the present Czar turned the first sod at Vladivostok. He was then on that journey in the East where the traveller to-day can trace his footsteps marked by triumphal arches in every town he passed through. Great as was the length of the railway, it presented no serious engineering difficulties. The whole route is along vast level plains, except over the Ural and Khilgan Mountains, and in the former the grades are not very severe. The most difficult bit, which is now under

construction around the south shore of Lake Baikal, was omitted from the original plan in favour of crossing the lake by steamer. There are numerous rivers crossed, totalling all together over thirty miles of bridges, some of them very wide, as for instance that at Krasnoyarsk, which spans the Yenisei, and is 931 yards long, the bridge over the Obi, which is 840 yards, and that over the Irtush, 700 yards.

The total distance from Vladivostok to St Petersburg is 5800 miles, to Port Arthur just 6000, and to Pekin by the present route 6300 miles. When the line is opened through Mongolia there will be a saving in the journey from Pekin to St Petersburg of about 900, bringing the capital of China within 5400 miles of that of Russia.

Up to the end of the year 1900, £65,745,000 had been spent on the Trans-Siberian Railway, which then left a balance of £16,855,000 of the sum that it was originally estimated to cost still to be expended. This amount has been since exceeded without taking into consideration what has been spent on the Manchurian or Mongolian lines.

Great as these sums appear, there can be no question of its being a sound investment for Russia. In 1899 the revenue from the State railways was paying half the interest upon her national debt, and apart from the secondary advantages of being the means of opening up and developing Siberia, the railway before many years is certain to become a paying concern on its own basis. The official returns of freight and passengers are not available beyond 1900, but even from these one can get some slight indication of the future development of traffic. For instance, the total number of passengers carried in 1900 was 2,716,091, in 1899, 1,834,582, showing an increase of 881,509 the only item showing a decrease being in the number of workmen carried and in the number of prisoners and their escorts, the last item

showing a decrease of 10,000. The total number of emigrants carried in 1900 was 318,901, which showed an increase of 100,000 over the previous year, but the number being carried this year, I was told by one of the high officials of the line, is likely to be well over half a million.

CHAPTER XVII

THE REFORM OF THE EXILE SYSTEM

THE NUMBER OF EXILES—POLES—NIHILISTS—DEMOCRATIC CONDEMNATION—THE POWER OF THE MIR—EDUCATED EXILES AND THEIR WORK—EXPLORATIONS OF TSCHKANOBSKY—COLONISATION BY CRIMINALS A FAILURE—REFORMS—THE IMPERIAL EDICT OF 1900—ITS SIGNIFICANCE—EFFECT ON SIBERIA OF THE ABOLITION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT—GLIMPSE OF A PRISON TRAIN

THERE is no subject in connection with Siberia on which foreigners seem to be so misinformed as on the exile system as it is carried on to-day. A lurid and ghastly picture of horrors vaguely fills the mind, but when the traveller through the country goes to investigate for himself, seeks definite information, and visits the prisons to which there is really no difficulty in getting admission, the conclusion he comes to is very different from what his imagination had conjured up as the result of reading such books as Tolstoy's "Resurrection," etc. Up to the beginning of last century trustworthy records were not kept of the number of exiles transported to Siberia. We know that the process dates back to after the first conquest of the country by Yermak, and we also know that in 1593 the assassins of the Czarevitch Dmitri together with the bell of Uglich, which tolled the alarm at the time of the murder, were deported to the Tobolsk government. At the commencement of the nineteenth century a large number of Poles were sent to Siberia, as again after the revolutions of 1831 and 1863, when after the latter Alexander II. deported as

many as 50,000 of them. The Nihilistic movement in the latter part of his reign, which culminated in his assassination, was the cause of the exiling of a large number of people who, although there were no definite offences brought home to them, were suspected of being Nihilists.

From 1807 until 1899, 864,549 persons were exiled to Siberia, including the husbands, wives and families of those who voluntarily accompanied their relatives; of these latter there were 236,000. In 1898 there were 298,574 transported persons living in Siberia; half of these were exiled as punishment for offences under the penal code, the other half were those who were banished by action of the Russian communes. It is curious in an autocratic government to find what power is exercised by this most democratic of institutions, the mir or commune. They have the right, under conditions established by law, to refuse to readmit into their community men or women who have been convicted in the courts and who have undergone a penalty in consequence. They have the power to ostracise or expel any of their members who are useless or objectionable to the community. The largest proportion of those who are thus expelled are inveterate drunkards whose fondness for vodka makes them confirmed idlers, beggars and those who are too lazy to do their share of the work in the commune. These sentences of expulsion must be agreed to by unanimous vote so that when we consider that the Russian peasants are as a rule rather good-natured and easy-going beings one is rather surprised at the numbers sent into exile by these village tribunals, and one can easily imagine what an utterly thriftless and useless set of vagabonds they must be who are sent to shift for themselves in the wilds of Siberia. As can readily be understood, these people become a terrible curse to the districts to which they are sent. Mr Soloman, Director-in-Chief of the Prison Administration of Russia, says that of the number of transported persons residing

in Siberia, "the third of this mass, one hundred thousand men, escape all control. The place of their residence is unknown to the police. They steal on the highways and in villages, they beg and extort money in every way possible. In the summer they bivouac under the stars and conceal themselves in the forests of Siberia; in the winter they move towards the cities and use every method to secure a lodgment in the local prisons." Just as the English colonists objected and protested against sending



A Group of Exiles.

out convicts to the places in which they were settled, so do the quiet and industrial settlers in Siberia object to the exportation of these criminals and vagabonds and their being victimised by them, and as in answer to the remonstrances of the British colonists the law was changed, so it has now been changed in Russia.

The political exiles, on the other hand, have done much for the improvement and colonisation of Siberia. Generally speaking, after they were exiled they were allowed complete liberty to pursue whatever occupations they wished, and to live with their wives and families in such style as their means could afford. The numbers of political prisoners as well

as the hardships of their condition have, I think, been exaggerated in the popular mind. Except in such periods as those of the Polish revolutions and the time of the Nihilists, the annual number of political exiles has not averaged more than between sixty and seventy. Much ot the scientific information which we have of Siberia is due to the labours and investigations of the more cultured political exiles. It is they who have studied the history, manners and customs of native races such as the Yakuts, the Buriats and the Chukches, and their researches have received honourable recognition from the scientific institutions of Russia. To them we owe meteorological observations carefully recorded in various parts of the country, as well as valuable contributions to the study of its geology. Tschkanobsky, a political exile who was banished to Siberia in 1863, was employed by the Imperial Geographical Society to make for them observations in the province of Yakutsk, and with funds supplied by the society, he was put in charge of an exploring expedition and travelled through the then unknown region between the Yenisei and Lena Rivers. At its conclusion in 1876 he obtained his pardon and was allowed to return to St Petersburg with a large quantity of material he had collected and which he arranged and classified for the society's museum. Many political exiles have got positions under the government of Siberia and have been given places of trust and importance. Some of the finest residences we see in the country have been built by exiles of means, such as the fine house at present occupied by the Governor of West Siberia in Irkutsk, which was purchased by the State from the builder.

On the whole, however, colonisation by criminals or by exiles has proved a failure. Chief amongst the reasons are first of all, the large proportion of those transported have no inclination or capacity for industrial pursuits; then there was an enormous preponderance of unmarried

men ; and of those who were inclined to settle and cultivate the land a large number were dumped down in unsuitable localities, often in a state of abject poverty and with the unfavourable preparatory training for the task before them of long wandering from *étape* to *étape* with all the debasing and contaminating influences of prison life. The mortality amongst them was great, and many thousands of these unfortunates passed away leaving as little impression on the country as the last winter's snow.

Considering this state of things it is not surprising but it is also gratifying to find that a drastic and radical change in the whole system is now taking place. On the 25th of June 1900 the Emperor signed an edict embodying the reforms, the main points of which the Director-in-Chief of the Prison Administration summarises as follows : " Crimes and misdemeanours under common law which, according to the penal code in force, entail transportation under its different forms, will hereafter be punished by imprisonment of from eight months to two years, or by sentence to a house of correction from one and a half to six years.

" The provisions of the penal code concerning transportation for political crimes and for criminal acts against the laws and institutions of the Orthodox Church will be preserved, but Siberia will not be the only place for such transportation.

" Vagabonds refusing to disclose their identity, who are for the most part escaped convicts, after having suffered imprisonment in a house of correction for four years, will be transferred to the island of Sakhalin.

" The right of the communes, both rural and bourgeoises, to refuse readmission to members who have suffered a penalty deprivative of liberty is abrogated.

" The rural communes (but not the communes bourgeoises) will retain the right to deliver to the authorities such of their members as are dangerous to public security. The place of their residence will be fixed by the adminis-

tration, but they may, with the consent of the local police, leave that place on condition that they do not return to the province from which they have been expelled. After five years of good conduct they may ask the Minister of the Interior to remove that restriction.

"Transportation will be confined to political and religious criminals, the number of whom does not average more than 100 individuals a year, and to vagabonds, not identified, the average number of whom is 430 a year.

"The Council of the Empire, in submitting to his Majesty the Emperor the scheme of law for the suppression of transportation, expressed itself in these words: 'The Middle Ages left to Russia three legacies—torture, the knout and transportation. The eighteenth century abolished torture, the nineteenth the knout, and the first day of the twentieth century will be the last of a penal system based upon transportation.'"

A little consideration of the above will show at once the significance and far-reaching importance of the measure. The right which the mir possessed of practically committing people to exile has been done away with; this means reducing at one stroke the number of exiles by half; imprisonment or detention in a house of correction has been substituted for transportation as punishment for crimes and misdemeanours under the common law, and instead of criminals being scattered throughout the length and breadth of Siberia they will now be all corralled in the island of Sakhalin. It must be borne in mind that capital punishment has been abolished in Russia since 1753, except for political crimes, and ruffians considered by the majority of civilised nations as unfit to live, were only condemned to twenty years' hard labour until quite lately, and now, although there is a nominal life sentence, the actual term is shortened so that it never actually exceeds that limit. So far from the punishment of criminals being severe in Russia, I think it is quite the

reverse. To quote from Dr Wright on the subject: "Of the 2114 prisoners in Kara in 1870, 793 were murderers, 409 had committed robbery with violence, 38 were incendiaries, 22 had committed rape, 46 were forgers, while 677 are set down as vagabonds, 86 as offenders against discipline and defaulters in public service, and 73 as various. Of 378 prisoners sent to other places in the Amur valley, among the men were 155 murderers, 39 highway robbers, 17 thieves, 9 who had committed robbery with violence, 4 who had committed arson, 3 counterfeiters, 3 who had been guilty of seduction, and 3 of incest. Among the women, 28 had murdered their husbands, 6 had murdered illegitimate children, 17 had murdered other persons, 7 had committed arson, and 1 had committed highway robbery."

These are the kind of people about whose treatment in Siberian prisons, and the hardships they endure in them, so much hysterical rubbish is so frequently written; yet it speaks volumes for the actual condition of things within their walls when we find such large numbers of the vagabonds who scour the country, subsisting by stealing and not stopping at robbery with violence or worse crimes, will, when winter comes on, commit some offence so as to use them as a lodging during the severe weather.

Political offenders and those guilty of crimes against the laws and institutions of the Orthodox Church are still liable to transportation to Siberia, but on those convicted this punishment is not necessarily inflicted. As I have pointed out above, many of the best classes of political prisoners have fared well and spent their lives not too disagreeably or unprofitably in Siberia. The improved condition of the country which is so rapidly taking place will make it still less undesirable for residence, and what was unquestionably a terrible hardship, namely, the tedious journey going from one perhaps overcrowded and dirty *étape* to another, has now been done away with since the completion of the Siberian railway. On my whole journey

across I only passed one train carrying prisoners; the carriages in which they were confined were much better than those conveying the greater number of the emigrants. It was on its way to Sakhalin; it was drawn up at the station of Marinsk, and as we ran alongside we saw that it was a prison train from the barred windows. It was an interesting lot of pictures that were framed by these windows, through which faces wistful, sullen, grave and even gay looked out, but the gaiety was confined to the faces of a few little children. There were a couple of handsome, dark-eyed young men at one, who looked as if they might have been political prisoners of the student class; the face of a villainous-looking old man with shaggy beard was stretched out towards the window of the next compartment from the shelf on which he was lying. Through another a fair-haired young woman with pince-nez, and a man with long hair brushed back from a rather intellectual forehead, gazed out. Then there came a window full of ordinary-looking faces; next, by himself, was a young man with a simply beautiful face—he would have made an excellent painter's model for the Christ—with uncut young beard and finely shaped nose with delicate nostrils, and deepset sad eyes that looked out from under a placid brow. He seemed sensitive to the inquisitive glances of passers-by, and lent his head on his hand, half covering his face. From the next window, which was open, two young children held up by their mothers pressed their chubby faces to the cross bars and seemed to be enjoying themselves, but their fat pudgy hands held out through them seemed claiming the spring trees opposite in remonstrance with these bars. The bell for their train sounded; I had just time to get a package of sweets from my compartment and fill their eager hands as the train moved along the platform. They were old enough to know what sweets were for, as one could see from their delighted little faces. One of the pleased mothers crossed herself, I suppose by way of thanks.

The burly soldiers stationed along the platform to see that no one went near the prison vans looked the other way. As his window passed I caught a glimpse of the Christ-like head still bowed on his white, blue-veined hand; I would have liked to have known his story and why he was being sent to Siberia.

Even though it will be many years before the country will recover from having been made for so long the dumping ground for criminals this must be regarded as a great and wholly admirable measure, equalling in importance the abolition of serfdom, and will make its originator remembered in history for removing that curse that hung like a cloud over the country through which he has laid his path of empire.

CHAPTER XVIII

ACROSS THE OBI BASIN

KRASNOYARSK AND ITS POSSIBILITIES—THE RIVER PATHS OF SIBERIA—URMANS AND THE TUNDRA BELT—WHERE THE WORLD IS COLD—EXPLORERS—AN ARCTIC WEDDING TOUR—A TRAGEDY—THE BARABA STEPPE—THE WORLD'S GREATEST COALFIELDS—TWENTY-SIX MILLION POUNDS IN SIGHT—COSSACKS OF THE STEPPES—COLD STORAGE AND EXPORTS—A NILE VALLEY OF THE NORTH

I LEFT Tomsk in company of one of the professors of the university, a cultured and delightful travelling companion, who was going on vacation to Europe, and with that feeling of the smallness of the world which one is always experiencing if travelling much, found that we had a mutual friend at Oxford with whom he had corresponded for years on scientific subjects. The greater part of the journey to the river Obi was through a monotonous stretch of dense forest almost oppressively sombre in its immensity. At the Obi station on the precipitously steep left bank of the river, a town is rapidly growing up. It was a few years ago merely a little settlement as a stopping-place for emigrants either on their way to the mining regions of the Altai Mountains or to the land allotted them, while waiting for steamers to take them up or down the river, of which there is often quite an insufficient number to deal with the traffic: the emigrants are often compelled to remain there several weeks until the congestion is relieved. In this spot nearly all the favourable conditions obtain which contribute to the importance of Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk, and

Omsk—the railway intersecting a great river navigable north and south in the midst of a rich but little developed area. A great city is bound to rise at this, one of the cross roads on the path of empire.

For a day's journey after leaving the station of Obi the train passes through a tract of country covered again by the deep black loam which is the mantle that is to enrich Siberia wherever it is spread. The country is more thickly settled, the dwellings of the people are more substantial and comfortable looking, the people who congregate at the stations are more thoroughly Russian in appearance, and we see fewer specimens of the aborigines. The immense tract which is drained by the Obi and its tributaries is a vast level plain sloping gently from the Altai Mountains in Mongolia to the Arctic Ocean. The area of the region drained by it is considerably over 900,000 square miles. Although we speak of the basin of the Obi, its principal tributary, the Irtush, is 400 miles longer than it above the point of junction, being 2500 miles in length. It rises in the Altai Mountains and flows almost due west for over 200 miles before it crosses the Russian frontier, and from there is navigable right down to the Arctic Ocean, a distance about equal to that across the Atlantic from England to North America. The superb waterways of Siberia, broad and deep with a not too rapid current, will be a most important factor in the development of the commerce of the country, and the construction of a few short canals is all that is needed to complete a great water route east and west. The navigable tributaries of the Obi for instance approach the Yenisei so closely that only very short portages are necessary, and at present it is possible to go from Lake Baikal to the Ural Mountains *viâ* the Angara, Yenisei, the Kas River and Canal into the Ket, which flows into the Obi, and thence by one of the western tributaries to Tiumen or beyond. After flowing through Lake Zaisan the Irtush turns north-eastward

and flows through a deep and picturesque rocky valley, with here and there precipitous cañons for more than 100 miles through spurs of the Altai Mountains, and tributaries on the way bring it into communication with the mining centres and extremely fertile valleys situated amongst them. From Semipalatinsk, just north of the fiftieth parallel, there is a regular service of steamers down to Omsk and Tobolsk.

On the right-hand side of the river stretching eastward to the Obi is the great Baraba Steppe which is over 50,000 square miles in extent, and is covered with wonderfully rich soil, but the country is so flat and the natural drainage so inadequate that it will require artificial drainage on a large scale before it can be developed into one of the most productive tracts in the entire Russian Empire, as it will probably be some day.

The Obi River itself rises also just on the Mongolian frontier, at the foot of the Altai Mountains, on the other side of the same range from the source of the Irtush. At 250 miles from the border is the town of Biisk, and from there to the Arctic the river is navigable. Below Tomsk the Chulym River flows into it after winding a circuitous course through one of the best agricultral districts in the region, then the Obi flows north-west through the Baraba Steppe till it joins the Irtush at Troitskoe at the sixty-first parallel. North from there, there is a tract of over 100,000 square miles of dank and desolate marches called urmans, covered with thick jungle where pine trees, firs, beeches and immense cedars abound, and fallen tree trunks cover the ground, preserved from rapid decay by the peculiar climate which, together with the thick matted undergrowth and moist treacherous soil make the country almost impossible to penetrate. Beyond this district the trees gradually become small and stunted and give place to dwarf willows, and there the soil thaws in the summer only to a depth of little over eighteen inches or two feet, and below that for hundreds of feet is rock bound in the

grip of an eternal frost. In these frozen depths the carcases of the mammoth have been found with the flesh and hair in a perfect state of preservation, the contents of the stomach showing their last meal eaten thousands of years ago, which prove that they fed on twigs and branches of trees such as are growing in the district at the present time. Farther north is the tundra belt, which has little grass and is barely covered with moss, the last effort of vegetable nature in the frozen wilderness which borders the Arctic Ocean.

This broad belt of tundra, south of which is the great zone of forest which stretches right across the continent, has been little explored. Mr Stadling was the first European traveller who crossed from the Yenisei to the Lena rivers, an expedition which he undertook in search of Andrée after his ill-fated ballooning attempt to reach the North Pole. The distance travelled by him was 1860 miles, which he completed in the short time of fifty-one days, a rather fine performance, considering that the ground had never been traversed before by a civilised man, and the course taken by the nomadic inhabitants being much farther south through the zone of forest. Stadling says of the country he traversed, "This Nosovaya tundra, the highest tundra on the Taimur, is flat and abounds in marshes and lakes, making travelling easy in good weather. . . . At one place near a lake we found, to our surprise, a thin forest of small and stunted larch trees, forming an island in this boundless frozen 'sea,' as the natives in their picturesque language call the tundra. In this same lake region we came upon a number of very poor native families of various races, occupying themselves with fishing and trapping foxes."

On the Khatanga River he found a number of more prosperous native camps or villages inhabited by people called Dolgans, who are not even nominally Christians converted to the Orthodox Church but are pure Shamans; their

sole trade is in furs, the price of which is beaten down unmercifully by the Siberian merchants, who have control of their only market, and who debase and pauperise them by selling them vodka. Two attempts were made to reach the mouth of the Yenisei River from the mouth of the Lena; they both ended in tragedies, and the account of each makes a sad tale in the history of that bleak and lonely littoral. The Russian lieutenant Prontschischev, who made the attempt in 1737, sailing from the mouth of the Lena, got half way as far as the most northern point of the Taimur peninsula, but there was met by contrary winds and could not force his way through the broken ice in his sailing vessel. After trying for many days to beat against a strong westerly wind, he abandoned the attempt and turned back to make for the mouth of the Olenek River, just west of the Lena delta, where he intended to winter. Before making it the wind changed and blew hard from the south-east, and for a week he was kept beating off shore in a nasty sea thick with great blocks of broken ice. He was accompanied by his wife on what was a unique wedding trip, as they had only just got married before starting. Worn out by the hardships, anxiety and disappointments of the voyage, he died before the vessel reached shore, and his young wife only survived him two days, she expiring just as the vessel reached land, where they were buried side by side on the bleak shore of the desolate Arctic Ocean. The crew abandoned the vessel and succeeded in reaching Yakutsk. "The fate of De Long's party, which is well known, was even more tragic. His steamer, the *Jeannette*, was wrecked on June 12th, 1881, considerably north-east of the New Siberian Islands, in latitude 77° 15′ N., longitude 154° 59′ E. By working their way over the floe ice and through the open water in three boats, his party all succeeded in reaching a point ninety miles north-east of the Lena delta, where they were overtaken by a severe storm. The boat under charge of Chipp with its

crew was lost, and the two other boats, under De Long and Melville, were separated. Melville and his party reached the mouth of the Lena safely, and proceeded up the river to get aid to search for their missing companions. The first of November at Bulun they found two of De Long's party, Nindemann and Noros, whom De Long had ordered, on October 9th, 1881, to march ahead and try to get aid and food for the remainder of the party. They told him that, after fearful suffering and struggling, they had reached a deserted hut on October 19th. Here they found some half-rotten fish remnants, which they ate and then tried to proceed, but lacked the strength. On the 22nd they were discovered by a native, Androssoff, who brought them food and then took them to Bulun. They tried by gestures to get them to understand that there was a party down the river who were starving. The natives only hurried them on up the river all the faster, so it was not till after Melville found them that aid was sent to De Long's party. Had Nindemann and Neros succeeded in making the natives understand at first, De Long might have been saved. As it was, the last camp of De Long's party was not found till March 23rd, 1882, when Melville discovered De Long's arm sticking out of the snow. From the position it was evident that he died while trying to move his records back from the river to higher ground, where the spring floods would not wash them away. The last entry in his journal was, 'October 30th (1881), Sunday.—Boyd and Gortz died during the night. Mr Collins dying.' A large wooden cross on Monument Cape marks the spot where Melville buried De Long and his companions, but the bodies were later removed to this country."

Where at the Arctic Circle the river widens out into the Gulf of Obi, the Yalmal Peninsula stretching out into the ocean forms the left-hand bank from there to the mouth. From the base of this Peninsula to the westward on the other side the Ural Mountains commence to rise,

first in undulating hills of no great altitude, gradually getting higher towards the southward. From just below the Arctic Circle they run due south along the sixtieth parallel. All that tract of country between them and the Obi and Irtush rivers, forming the western portion of the basin, is extremely fertile and is capable of being made enormously productive if there was a sufficient population for its development. It is watered by a network of rivers, most of which are navigable, the Conda, Tara, Tayda and Miyas, east and westwards, and the Isham as well as the main river running north and south, added to which now in addition it has the Trans-Siberian Railway running directly through it to bring its produce to the European markets.

The extensive mining operations at present carried on in the Ural Mountains are only tapping the mineral possibilities of the range, but the supplies for the mining population and the expenditure of its members are not inconsiderable assistance to the development of the local markets. Needless to say, all this territory is capable of supporting a population very many times more numerous than it has at present, and notwithstanding its proximity to Europe it is astonishing to find what primitive agricultural implements are in use, and that there is a total absence of modern harvesting machinery ; here, as well as throughout the rest of Siberia, one sees the oxen drawing wooden ploughs and the timber being laboriously cut into planks with hand saws, while as for drainage and irrigation the inhabitants are an immeasurable distance behind the Chinese.

The construction committee of the Siberian Railway started drainage works in the Baraba Steppe in the year 1895, with a view to enlarging the cultivable area in proximity to the line. It has been estimated that there is 4,000,000 desiatins which ought to be drained, and the works now started in seventy-five sections will drain about

400,000 desiatins in a district that at present has a population of 16,000; canals to the length of over 600 versts have already been dug, and the work will be pushed forward on a larger scale in the near future.

The Kirgis Steppe, lying between Irtush and the Ishim, forms an important part of the great Obi basin, and is traversed by the Siberian Railway across the northern portion from Omsk to Petropalovsk. The trade of the steppe from time immemorial has always flowed northwards, where the nomads, Kirgaz-Kaishas, Dzhangurs and Kalmyks brought their goods for sale or barter to the fairs, which were frequented by merchants from Russia. In the eighteenth century customs, barriers and barter courts were established in the district now traversed by the railway for the purpose of dealing with this traffic. The present line intersects the caravan routes and steppe highways which tap the main centres of the vast steppe borderland region lying to the south, which, including the Akmolinsk and the Semipalatinsk territories, comprise a superficial area of 19,000 square miles. The Akmolinsk territory is a great level plain, sloping northwards from the elevated portion comprising the desert called the Hunger Steppe, a waste of shifting sands which changes at the forty-eighth parallel into a more fertile plain, and increases in fertility as it goes northwards. The plain is broken by the mountain groups of the Akmolinsk and the Alpine peaks of the Semipalatinsk. These ranges of the Kirgiz border contain untold mineral wealth which as yet lies altogether unexplored. There are complaints of the difficulty of getting an adequate supply of labour, as most of that available is attracted to the Siberian railway, but even on the small scale in which mining has been carried on the results are extremely promising from the Semipalatinsk Mountains; for instance, in the year 1897, 1224 lbs. of pure gold was extracted. Lead mines occur frequently in the same districts, but are entirely neglected and left unexploited; rich

deposits of silver have been found in the Zaisan and Karkalinsk districts, and copper in the Akmolinsk, which is being worked at the Spas copper-works, belonging to the wealthy firm of Riazanov, and is equal to the best copper obtained from the Ural Mountains.

Iron deposits abound in the Kirgiz Steppe, and it is simply astonishing that they are not worked and developed considering the demand there is for iron throughout Siberia and the high price that is charged for Ural iron throughout the country. The one thing necessary for the economic and profitable development of these rich mineral deposits is coal, and coal is to be found in abundance. Close to the Spas copper-works for instance is the Karagandin coal-mine, one of the greatest in the world, worked by the same firm, and in the Semipalatinsk district along the left bank of the Irtush, and close to the railway, farther south near Pavlodara, there is a large deposit worked by the Irtush Mining Company. Situated also on the left bank of the river, is an enormous deposit worked by the gold miner Popov, which contains a series of seams five sazhans thick, and again at Kun-Cheku, 480 versts from Tomsk, is a large deposit of coal of excellent quality lying in seams with a thickness of six sazhans. To get an idea of the enormous wealth represented by these deposits it is worth while to look into the figures of one which was carefully prospected and investigated by a well-known and capable engineer named Meister. This is situated at Ekibas-Tuz, 132 versts from Pavlodara, near the Irtush, and is being worked by the Voskresensk Mining Company. According to the report of the engineer, the strata lies in seams of between five and seven sazhans in thickness, and only so far as he has explored, he estimates that it contains 104,000,000 tons of coal. The quality of the coal is most excellent, burning with a bright and clear flame. It is obvious of what supreme importance this is to the mining industry of a district so richly supplied with minerals

as is the Kirgiz steppes, and what a source of wealth it will be in itself to the district; taking it at only five shillings a ton, there is £26,000,000 worth in sight. These beds are connected by a broad-gauge line 100 versts long with the Irtush, by which it is carried in barges down to the town of Omsk for use on the Trans-Siberian main line, and has the same cheap route for carriage to all the markets along the vast river system. With an instance such as this, which may be taken as merely an example of innumerable other similar sources of wealth which are being tapped by the Siberian Railway, one sees the ridiculousness of the croakings of those critics who keep harping on the large expenditure of Russia on the railway and the various schemes connected with it, and the absurdity of the gloomy anticipations in which they indulge when profits so enormous on industries it has been the means of developing are already in sight as a reward of their business-like and far-seeing policy.

The natives of the Kirgiz steppes, are the last representatives of the Turko-Mongol hordes who in past times used to invade Europe, and form about eighty per cent. of the population of the steppe borderland, were given in the census of 1897 as numbering 1,364,000. They are of a curious religious belief which is composed of a mixture of Mahommedanism and Shamanism; they are nomads, and except during the severest months of winter live in the open steppe, wandering about in an unmarked path, with a certain definite direction handed down to them by ancient custom and tradition, living under their "yurtas" or light movable tents made of plaited wood and felt. These "yurtas" are of two shapes, one conical, the other in the form of a cupola, and some are elaborately ornamented, and cost the owners as much as £15. In the winter they retire to their camps in the river valleys or under the shelter of the forests or of the mountains, and there live in small wooden huts. Some of these winter settlements

show signs of permanence, and give indications that they are gradually and slowly abandoning their nomadic habits and taking to a more settled life. All the land of the steppes belongs, like the rest of Siberia, to the State; the Czar, in fact, is the sole landlord, and the use of it is granted to the nomads as it is to the settlers who are flocking out to the rest of Siberia. Along the north of the steppe stretch in a line the Cossack settlements, which are now traversed by the Siberian Railway between Petropalovsk and Omsk, the troops being under the command and administration of the chief ataman of the Siberian Cossack troops. Many of these Cossacks are Mahommedans, who engage in cattle-breeding, fishing, and agriculture. Their period of service extends from the age of eighteen to twenty-one for a sort of preparatory training, after which there is a period of twelve years' service, then there is a reserve class, from which they are discharged at the age of thirty-eight. Their military service is so arranged as not to interfere seriously with their harvesting operations or the pursuit of their other avocations; in the event of war the Siberian Cossacks can be called upon to mobilise nine regiments of cavalry of 600 each.

Portions of the Kirgiz lands are set apart from time to time for the settlement of colonists, and of late years these allotments have been larger in size and more numerous than heretofore. The selection and demarkation of these lands suitable for emigrants, and the improvement of the land itself by drainage, has been carried out under the supervision of the committee of the Trans-Siberian Railway, which is also ready to foster and encourage the export of produce in every way possible. To take as an example the butter industry—before the railway was started, the butter was forwarded from the Ishim Basin to Kurgan and Tiumen, where it was sent into European Russia, and had a large sale also in Turkey and Germany; there were

large firms who purchased the butter from the farmers, and the trade from Kurgan and Tiumen alone exceeded 2,000,000 roubles annually. The railway has now greatly improved and developed this branch of industry. All along the line, in the towns and villages in its vicinity, the old primitive methods have been given up, and even the smallest little village has its creamery with separators of the newest pattern. I have never tasted more delicious butter than that which we got in the restaurants and at the refreshment buffets right across the continent; it is quite fresh without any mixture of salt, and is just half the price of a similar quality to be got in England. In order to bring this in the best marketable state to Europe the railway company has constructed cars fitted with refrigerators, which are now employed to their utmost capacity in this lucrative and rapidly increasing industry, and by their means new markets are being opened up for fresh Siberian butter in most of the western countries of Europe.

In a similar manner the export trade in fresh meat is being developed and is rapidly increasing. In the Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk territories there are over 7,000,000 head of cattle, which of course leaves an enormous surplus for export as soon as facilities are offered for dealing with it. The cattle are of medium size, and furnish good meat when exported alive, are very easily fattened, and yield a large profit to the purchasers who go in for preparing them in this way for the market owing to the very low price at which they are sold. The Kirgiz carry on their cattle-breeding in a most careless and primitive way, but the paternal government is making great efforts to improve the breed by importing animals from European Russia. The Kirgiz sheep represent a great portion of their possessions; they are a very large size, with coarse wool and a fat tail weighing from 30 to 40 lbs.; they are shorn twice a year, and as the flesh is full of fat this forms a very important

part of their produce, and a very large export trade is done in it.

These unprepossessing and cadaverous-looking animals, the little Kirgiz horses, are wonderfully hardy; they have the most extraordinary endurance. The owner will ride one with only short rests for from ten to twelve hours continuously, and during that time will cover a distance of from 100 to 150 versts. They are turned out to graze, and kept out through the severe winter, and during that six months they have to find their own fodder as best they can. Efforts are being made by that department of the Government in charge of the Imperial studs to improve their size and appearance by the admixture of fresh blood, while retaining their admirable qualities for endurance and hard work. In connection with the live stock of the country an increasing export trade is being done in horse skins, cow, camel, sheep and goat skins, camels' hair, sheeps' wool, horse hair, goats' wool, and horns, and all these articles have suddenly sprung into an enhanced value owing to the facility with which they are brought by the railway to the markets, where they fetch remunerative prices to the exporters.

It will therefore be seen what an enormous commercial future lies before this territory included in the basin of the Obi. What a source of wealth it will be to the Russian Empire and its landlord the State, and what a field it offers right at the frontier of European Russia to receive the overflow of its prolific population!

CHAPTER XIX

THE GREAT TREK EASTWARD

THE PROCESSION OF EMIGRANT TRAINS—THEIR OCCUPANTS—THE PROGRESS OF THE GROWING MIGRATORY MOVEMENT—THE FERTILITY OF THE LAND AWAITING OCCUPATION—SOME TALKS WITH THE EMIGRANTS—THE RAPID INCREASE OF THE POPULATION OF SIBERIA—THE MAKING OF MARKETS FOR THE MANUFACTURE OF GOODS—WHAT IT MAY AMOUNT TO BY THE END OF THE CENTURY—SIBERIAN SUNRISE

WHAT strikes the traveller most journeying by the Trans-Siberian Railway from the Pacific to Moscow is the great stream of emigrants flowing eastward along the route. There is nothing to be seen like it at present in any other part of the world. Every day one passes long trains laden with them, which at night are drawn up at the stations. There is something of a picnicing aspect about this great army of occupation. The first emigrant train I passed was in Manchuria, the second morning after starting on our journey. The cars principally occupied by the emigrants were just ordinary goods waggons, called the fourth class, in which the fares are extremely low. In the centre of each was a stove with the flue through the roof; at each end were three broad shelves, the top one for luggage and the other two capable of holding three or four people lying side by side. Considering the class of people they were for, and the degree of comfort they were probably accustomed to in their own homes, this was most likely considered very comfortable by them. It appeared to me preferable to the

more crowded third-class carriages. Judging by appearances these emigrants seemed thoroughly contented, and a more happy-looking lot of people it would be hard to find. They were physically most magnificent-looking specimens of humanity, very like Irish peasants, especially the women, who were dressed exactly in the same fashion, even to the wearing of shawls over their heads. Those in the train



Emigrants.

alongside of us were preparing breakfast and making their morning toilet, the latter not a very elaborate operation. There is a supply of hot water kept at every station ready for their use, gratis. Outside my window a youngster was pouring some from a kettle over the big brawny hands of three young men, who then applied it to their faces; they laughed as the water, which seemed boiling, made itself felt even through their horny skin. A great strapping young woman was lifting her children out of the high truck, just catching each by the upper arm in one hand and lifting it down; the last of five she deposited was a youngster

too young to walk, but was railed in to a chair which made a most excellent crate for the carriage of this infant emigrant.

There are stalls alongside of every station at which excellent food is sold at low prices. A quart bottle of milk is ten kopeks, a loaf of bread five kopeks, ten eggs for two-pence half-penny, cooked or raw, appeared to me the cheapest of all ; and then there were these large sausages, ham, sweets, cakes, and various other dainties loved by



An excellent Crate for an Infant Emigrant.

Russians. They certainly have good bakers all along the road; the brown bread is of close and heavy texture with a slightly salty taste. Most of the Russians on the train seemed to prefer it to the white, but I certainly think it is an acquired taste.

A blue enamelled kettle seems to be an indispensable part of the emigrant's outfit, and seems always in use, for the tea-drinking goes on more or less all the time. They looked an ideal lot for tackling the task of colonising the great virgin country that lay before them. There were hardly any old people among them, a great preponderance of young unmarried men and young married couples with two

or three children, and by the close resemblance, one frequently saw that the young unmarried sister of the wife was going along also.

Their paternal government has organised a system of arrangements extending from the time that they leave their native villages until they are located in their new homes, that is simply admirable. During the past century by far the greater part of the real colonisation of Siberia and the increase of population can be traced to the state-aided and free emigration. Every time sections of the country were thrown open and facilities afforded for getting there, thousands of people from various parts of Russia were found ready to move eastward. Just before the outbreak of the Crimean War the annual number of emigrants had increased steadily to large numbers. Then there was a set back for some years until after 1862, the year of the emancipation of the serfs, when the numbers increased beyond anything known in previous years. Between the years 1887 and 1895, 467,000 persons or 94,000 families settled in Siberia. Between '97 and '98 they had increased from that number, which was an average of 52,000 persons a year, to just four times that number, and the figures of this present year will easily surpass all previous records. It is not surprising that such an increase should follow the completion of the railway when we reflect that before emigrants had to journey by waggon, those going to the Amur district, for instance, would take three years to reach their destination.

The law of 1889 it was that first systematised state-aided emigration and provided the settlers with well-selected arable land, as well as the means of getting there. Now the emigrants who leave their homes, having complied with the necessary conditions, get a grant of forty acres of land per head free. They are exempted from taxes for three years, and can postpone their military service for a like period ; for the next three years they are only called upon to pay half taxes, so that it is six years before they have to

pay the full amount, which is then only two roubles seventy kopeks per desiatin. Very poor settlers receive in addition grants of wood for the construction of their houses and a supply of seed corn. In addition, the government is ready to advance thirty roubles to each family, and a hundred more if required and approved, without interest, to be repaid in ten years. Most efficient and practical arrangements are made all along the route. There are feeding



A sturdy young Emigrant.

stations where medical attendance can be obtained gratis by the emigrants, and carts are provided to take them from the railway to the ground allotted to them. Instead, therefore, of arriving at their destination worn out by the fatigues of an arduous journey, they arrive, after a long rest, well-fed, fit and strong for the struggle with primeval nature which lies before them. Along the country at the sides of the track one can see them entering into possession of their promised land. Those just arrived have put up rough little shelter tents, and pay no attention to anything at first until they have ploughed the ground and set their seed.

One sees the deep rich black earth being turned up by

the wooden ploughs for the first time since the world was made, the women as well as the men being hard at work providing what is to keep them through the long winter. Those who have completed their sowing we see erecting log-houses, and those who have been in the country for a year or more can show what very comfortable dwellings these can be developed into. They look a great deal better than the wretched-looking little hovels occupied by the peasants in Russian villages. When a group of them together form the nucleus of a village, it is not long before a little church is built in the midst, generally out of the Alexander III. Fund for that purpose, with its bright gilded icons and pictures, green cupolas and chime of bells that ring a welcome and call them for a blessing in their new-found land. "This is the Russia that I love," said Prince X. to me one day when we had been passing through several such villages, and I could not but feel warmed by some of the enthusiasm that he glowed with as he spoke of the meaning of it all—the great mission of Russia, as it appeared to him, and the march of its people on the path of fulfilment. I had often seen him stake the year's labour of one of these peasants at Monte Carlo on quatre-premiers, his favourite gamble. Theirs to work and his to play seemed an inherited condition, yet underlying was a community of patriotism. Nowhere do you see the grand seigneur act his part so well as in Russia; almsgiving seems a perquisite of their pride of place. The blind and lame beggars, and those who are neither, that line the steps of the churches and fringe the street corners are all pensioners of their pockets. I have never seen such generosity, not alone from the better but from the middle classes. One day when we were stopping at a station a little woman who was travelling on our train was accosted by a man who was emigrating to Siberia. With tears in his eyes he told the story of how he had run short of money before he could reach his destination. Only an

hour before I had heard her saying she considered the price of the wine on the train too high for her to afford to drink, and saw her drink beer instead. Yet she handed him a five-rouble note. He was one of the stragglers of that great eastward-moving army, and had nearly fallen out. It was quite clear his story was genuine. He stayed to bless her fervently, and then charged off to storm the ticket-office, and we saw him soon after squeezing his way into a crowded train that was at the platform waiting to start for a continuance of its eastward journey. It was interesting to talk with some of these emigrants we met every day One group I met at the station of Krasnoyarsk told me they had come from a village a hundred miles south of Moscow. Three years ago they had sent out a man from the village to look at the country to which they were thinking of going. He reported favourably. Then one family went out and sent back a good account, and now about six families were going out to take up adjacent land that was to be allotted to them. They all seemed confident and hopeful, and to look at the great brawny men, and women nearly as muscular, and healthy children, they ought to have every reason to be so. I asked them if they were not sorry to leave their old homes. "Yes," one of the women said, but her husband chipped in almost fiercely, "It was hard to make a living. Out there"—with a sweep of his hand eastward—"the land will be all our own," and he stamped his foot on the ground expressively. "The land our own"—is not that the secret of thrifty and industrious husbandry the wide world over?

There was a fair sprinkling of Jews amongst the emigrants, but they were all making for the towns, especially those near the gold-mines, where they already form a considerable portion of the population.

One is struck by how well and comfortably clad all these emigrants are—the men in thick frieze coats and trousers, with strong top-boots reaching to their knees,

fur caps and gloves, and as often as not fur-lined overcoats, which do duty as part of their bedding on the journey.

It is not surprising that at the census of 1897 it was found that the population of Siberia had increased by 100 per cent. as compared with the previous revision, taken in 1858 and 1859, by the addition of over 7,000,000 souls.

It will not be long before the effects of this great migratory movement will begin to be felt even beyond the confines of the Russian Empire. The abundant produce of this vast area of fertile virgin soil will soon find an outlet to the markets of the world. Already quantities of Siberian butter—and most excellent butter it is—are being sent to Europe, and either under its own name or as "best Danish butter" finds its way to English breakfast-tables. The standard of comfort of these settlers in Siberia is already much higher than what it was while they lived in Russia. Families who used to have meat perhaps once a week now have it every day, and the improvement of all the rest of their daily diet is in proportion.

The increased purchasing power of this new population will shortly be making itself felt. Clothing materials, tools, farming implements and the simpler kinds of agricultural machinery there is already a large demand for, which is bound to increase rapidly. The natural channel for a great proportion of this supply will be through the new port of Dalny and along the railway. The United States has been the first to realise the coming importance of this Siberian and Manchurian market, and has been quick to seize the opportunities offered. When the railway was being constructed they secured orders for the rails, and the first engines were Baldwin locomotives. In one case a number of them were turned out of the Philadelphia workshop and despatched on the way within ten days of the order being received. Dalny is only 6000 miles from America, and it is probable the new 12,000-ton steamers

being built by the Pacific Mail and the 26,000-ton vessels, the largest freight-carriers in the world, now being built in America by the Great Northern Company, will call there. Through Manchuria cities have sprung up at the command of the Czar, such as Harbin, the new Mukden, the new town in Port Arthur, and Dalny, the most wonderful of all. In each may be seen many thousands of pounds' worth of American steel structures, American roller-mills, American electric lights, and so on, and little or no sign of English manufactured articles. It is a great thing to be first in the field and to get the start in a new market, and here the Americans unquestionably have got it. We have facts and figures which may guide us in making an estimate of the size to which that market is likely to develop. There is no race in Europe more prolific than the Russians; the population doubles in sixty years. The birth-rate in Russia is 46.3, and the death-rate 33.6, which, on the population according to the census of 1897, leaves an annual surplus of 1,613,377. It is curious to find that the birth-rate in Siberia is higher and the death-rate lower than in Russia proper, the annual addition from the difference amounting to 265,300. This is, of course, exclusive of Manchuria. The emigration from Russia, which has been steadily increasing each year, and was 200,000 in 1898, will this year probably reach over 300,000, and is likely to go on increasing annually. The rich arable land awaiting cultivation by these people, exclusive of forest lands, is estimated at 500,000 square miles. This portion of the country now supports only 5,000,000, or about ten to the square mile, whereas if it were cultivated up to the same standard even as the best land in European Russia it would be capable of supporting a population of 50,000,000. We must add to this the 300,000 square miles of Manchuria, which every one outside a lunatic asylum or not in the British Foreign Office must now admit to be Russian territory.

There are therefore a number of causes all combining to ensure a rapid increase in the population of Asiatic Russia in the immediate future. First of all there is the surplus population of European Russia ready for emigrating, over one million and a half per annum. Then there is the inducement to others beyond that number, of practically free land and all sorts of help in settling there, and now this year there is easy, quick and very cheap transport by means of the railway. The want of this last was what kept back the settlement and development of Siberia heretofore more than anything else. The resources of Siberia and Manchuria are sufficient to maintain an immense population independently of the rest of the world. Iron and coal are to be found there in abundance as well as gold, copper and tin. The forests are practically inexhaustible. There is enormous water power waiting to be made use of and rivers affording means of cheap internal transport. People is all the country wanted, and they are now pouring in. What will the population of Asiatic Russia be by the end of the century? With the 135,000,000 people bound to double in the next sixty years, the question is, Where will they settle? It is not outside the range of probability that by 1950 the population of Asiatic Russia, including Manchuria may be fifty millions, by 2000, one hundred millions. Herein lies the significance of this great migratory movement to be seen to-day along the path of empire of the Trans-Siberian Railway, and which fills one with admiration for the foresight of the men who conceived and carried out the idea of making it, as well as for the executive ability of those who lead and guide the thousands on their great trek sunrise-wards.

CHAPTER XX

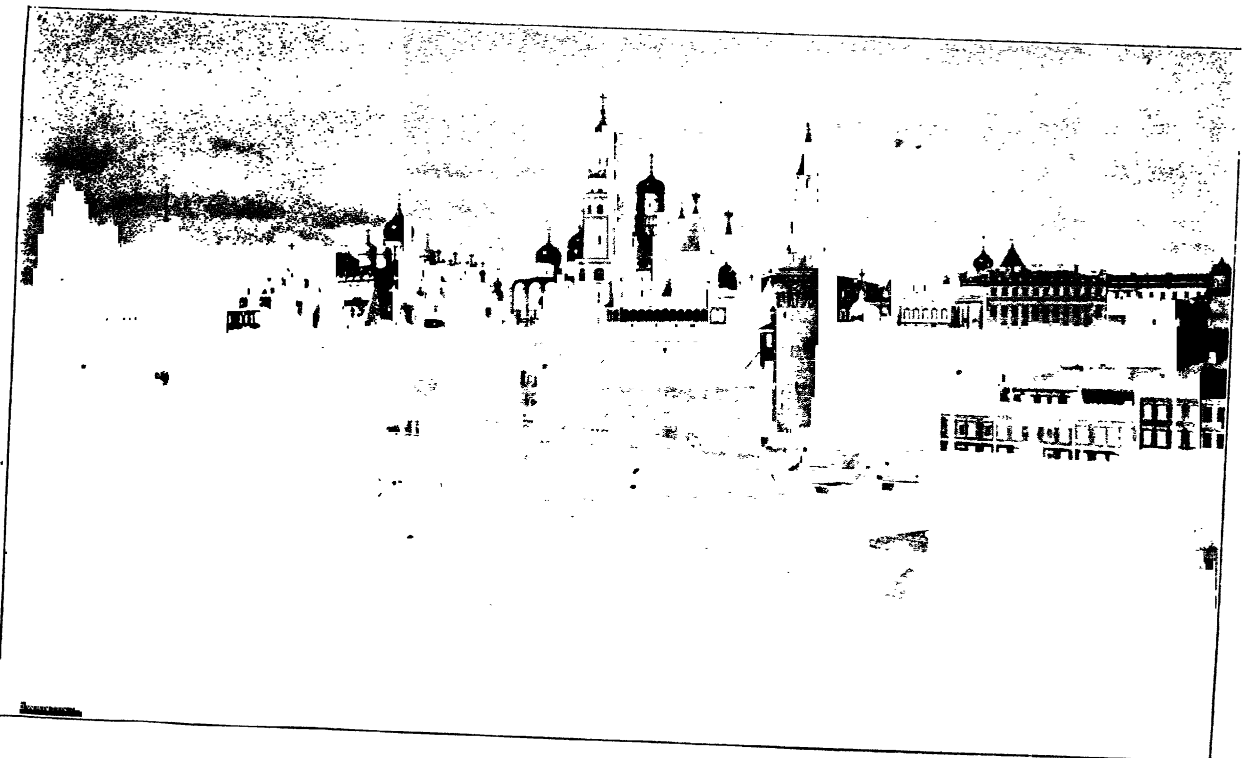
UNTO MOSCOW, THE HEART OF RUSSIA

INDUSTRIAL MOSCOW—ITS MILLIONAIRES—FIFTY PER CENT. DIVIDENDS — COTTON - SPINNING — PALATIAL SHOPS — RUSSIAN ILLITERACY—GOD AND THE CZAR—A SACRED AMBITION—WHERE NAPOLEON SLEPT—RESTAURANTS—THE BOULEVARDS—LOCAL COLOUR

It is certainly more interesting to make the Trans-Siberian journey from east to west than in the contrary direction, because travelling westward the panorama is constantly increasing in interest and fulness of detail until it ends at Moscow. To start from Moscow would mean that one was journeying each day into country becoming wilder and more barren, until Dalny, the very antithesis of Moscow, is reached.

When coming into a city unvisited before, one keeps painting a picture in the mind of what it may be like, and in the case of Moscow the imagination is not likely to suffer disappointment. It is the real capital of the empire steeped in the local colour of the country, magnificent, venerable, unique. The nominal capital, St Petersburg, is a city manufactured on the same pattern as many others.

For Russians Moscow is the Rome of their religion, the shrine of the empire's heirlooms, and now it has become the industrial and commercial capital of the country. The visitor is apt to become so attracted and fascinated by so much in it that appeals to him from what it contains, focussing the quintessence of the life of all the Russias in



The Kremlin

the past, that he overlooks as commonplace what it holds of accomplishment for the present and of promise for the future. A Russian Manchester is part of the environment of the old city, and its *nouveau riche* can be seen invading erstwhile exclusive places heretofore kept sacred to the *noblesse*. "The old order changeth, giving place to the new," here as elsewhere, but as in all else in this mighty empire, the invasion, transition, or revolution is on a big scale. Where elsewhere do you hear of factories earning fifty or seventy per cent. dividends? The balance-sheets of numbers of them are veritable fairy tales of romance. The commercial *nouveau riche* of Russia have sprung from the middle classes as a rule—men with a little money to commence with. If they had come from a higher or a lower class it might have in many ways been preferable. From the former, because they would have carried out the manner of thought and action of the grand seigneur, in its generosity, beneficence and imperial patriotism, on to a higher level with the more ample means for its exercise. From the latter, because their new power might leave them with some feelings of fellowship for the uplifting of the class to which they yesterday belonged. Now it is neither one thing nor the other. A middle-class dollarocracy has suddenly sprung up. History is always repeating itself from place to place as well as from time to time. The mushroom millionaire has a wife, and money puts her now pointed-toed foot on the first rung of the social ladder, and all her domestic influence will be in the direction of urging her spouse to help her progress, and so the comedy of the States we see played here. As the aristocracy of Russia are all landowners, so the acquisition of an estate is the first act of the newly arrived millionaire. He does not acquire it for the better development of the land, and it does not result in any improvement of agricultural methods or the betterment of those who till it, but is acquired for the sole purpose of bettering his social position. There is nothing

more remarkable in the Russia of to-day than the rapid growth of industrialism. The people who were the occupants of the grey, mournful, one-storeyed houses of the mud-stained villages are now flocking to the factories, where with long hours and poor pay their lot shows little improvement. That they are beginning to feel their position and also feel their power can be seen from the numerous strikes which are perpetually taking place in the various industrial centres. The enormous profits being earned by the manufacturing concerns are the result of the plentiful supply of cheap labour, and are no more likely to last at the present scale than is the price of labour to remain as low as it is at present. In no branch of industry is the rapid growth of Russia more apparent than in cotton spinning. Vast quantities of cotton now come from Turkestan, which is not liable to the duty imposed on foreign-grown cotton. About 400,000 bales come from there now annually, and the supply is increasing. Out of a total of 6,250,000 spindles in Russia there are over a third in the district surrounding Moscow. The demand for cotton goods within the empire itself is practically unlimited ; the entire population even in winter wear cotton underclothes, and now the Siberian Railway will in addition enable them to tap the markets of the East from the rear so to speak ; and in nearly all the cotton mills Englishmen were brought over at first to act as managers ; but the case in Russia has been very much similar to that in Japan, where they were retained until their employers had learned all they had to teach, and now their places are being filled by natives. In Russia there was an additional prejudice against the foreigners, which gave rise to added trouble when strikes arose. Outside the native tongue German seems to be the commercial language of Russia. Throughout the entire country, but in Moscow particularly, in the shops, places of business, restaurants, and public places, one perpetually hears it spoken, and all the educated people and the best

classes speak French. A knowledge of German would be far more useful for business purposes, and in fact all round, for the everyday use of the foreigner.

The commercial prosperity and progress of Moscow is evinced in nothing more remarkably than in the large number of immense shops and emporiums in course of erection. It already possesses an arcade surpassing the Galeria Umberto in Milan in the number of its shops, which practically form three covered streets, where they are not only on the ground floor, but a second or third row with pathway or a broad gallery running in front of them. A similar construction, which is to be a like honeycomb of shops, is in course of construction. Some of the new monster houses going up are of better designs than I have seen anywhere used for shop-building. Pictorial advertisements, or signs indicating what is to be sold within, are to be seen everywhere throughout Russia, owing to the fact that 70 per cent. of the population can neither read nor write. Although the patrons of these new emporiums may not be expected to belong to this majority, they keep up the pictorial fashion of ornamentation by decorating them with frescoes bold in design, and thoroughly artistic in their feeling. One notices provision being made for this enormous proportion of illiteracy in various departments of Russian life. In the barracks, for instance, there are rough prints, giving pictorial illustrations of every item of the soldiers' drill, to take the place of a drill book.

The most grave and serious impediment to the progress of the Russian people is their illiteracy, and the enormous difficulty there is of educating the masses. Education is now largely in the hands of the clergy, the village priest in most instances being also the village schoolmaster. It would be impossible in Russia at present to attempt the colossal task of carrying out anything like compulsory education.

The existence of God and the Czar, ever present in the Russian mind, is more constantly in evidence in Moscow,

the heart of Russia, than elsewhere. When passing the innumerable shrines, icons, and pictures that are to be found in almost every street, one sees the men of every station in life and all occupations—common soldiers, gentlemen in faultless tall hats, messenger boys and beggars uncover their heads and cross themselves devoutly ; and the women bow while they murmur short prayers. The remarkable



The Church in the Kremlin

thing about this is that it is not performed in a perfunctory manner, but as earnestly as if each prayer were the only one of the day. In no country in the world have I seen more outward evidence of genuine devotion. The great cathedrals are unlike the majority of those in most European cities. They do not owe the greater part of their decoration and grandeur to the devotion of bygone times, but throughout Russia expenditure on ecclesiastical objects has reached its highest level to-day. Next to the Kremlin itself, the most prominent object in the city is the new cathedral, surmounted with its cupolas of untarnished gold—

they look like pure gold at least, for the Russians appear to have the art of so treating their brass-work that it produces this effect—the interior rich in frescoes, gilding, paintings, and the same brass-work produces the impression of such gorgeousness throughout as prevents it from appearing gaudy.

The Kremlin is the cathedral of the Czar—of a line of Czars—and in its magnificent splendour there is nothing unworthy. The Czar is not himself, as is frequently supposed, the personal head of the Russian Church, although he has the appointment of the members of the Holy Council, which is the actual head and supreme authority. While rejecting the supremacy of the Pope, and the Catholic doctrine of his infallibility when he speaks *ex cathedrâ* to the universal Church on a matter of faith or morals, the Russian Church neither claims infallibility for itself, nor has it enunciated any additions of doctrine. It recognises the Council of Nicæa, but none of the œcumenical councils held subsequently. Claiming, as it rightly can, and does, the direct apostolic succession of its bishops, its priests can administer the sacraments, and can lay equal claim to the reality of the Real Presence in their churches with the Catholics; there being so very little that is different in the doctrine, teaching or spirit of the two Churches, that it must be an object, full of holy ambition, ever present in the minds of the Roman pontiffs, to unite the two.



Bell of Moscow.

Amongst the points of difference of the two, the most striking is the independence of the Roman Church of all governments, while the Russian Church is the handmaid of

the Czar, a great auxiliary power to that of the State, but quite subservient. The bishops of the Russian Church, all chosen from the monasteries, are celibates, whereas the priests must marry, and are usually the sons of priests, and their children look to the priesthood as their future profession.

Every day that the Kremlin is open to visitors, troops of country-folk, generally accompanied by their priests, can be seen wandering through the throne rooms, state ballroom, the museum, the treasury, and the tiny bedroom where for one night Napoleon slept; in the courtyard are lined hundreds of captured cannon; near by is the bell of Moscow and the broad terrace overlooking the river, with the great city stretching out beyond. There is employment for many days in exploring the riches of the Kremlin, or in wandering through the city in the droskies, which rattle over the cobble stones, vibrating one to the marrow, or by means of the more smooth locomotion of the tramways, on the outside of which, however, ladies are not permitted to travel. The hotel accommodation has improved with the progress of the city, and for those who may not care for Russian hotels, there are others there, such as the National, which for comfort and all modern luxuries are second to none in Europe. For those in search of local colour there are the great restaurants for which Moscow is famous, the circle of boulevards to wander through in the evening, where the city children who play there seem to me always to have a snow-pallor about their faces, the vegetable



Street in Moscow.

market in the morning, the Covent Garden of Moscow, and he should not fail to see something of the work of modern Russian painters. Most interesting of cities of the empire it is, what is venerably beautiful cheek by joul with what is throbbingly modern—new blood coursing through the old heart of Russia.

CHAPTER XXI

WHERE LEADS THE RUSSIAN PATH OF EMPIRE?

THE GREAT WESTWARD MOVEMENTS—THE HUNS AND MONGOLS—THE EASTWARD MOVEMENT—THE INDIA SCARE—THE STRENUOUS DIPLOMACY OF MR HAY—LIMITS TO THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE

THOSE who have made this journey by the Trans-Siberian Railway, or who have accompanied me thus far through these tedious pages, will now have traversed the country which has seen the progress of the two greatest movements of men across the surface of the earth. Before the birth of Christ, the first movement had begun of these people, who, prevented from travelling eastward by the Pacific Ocean, and crowded out of the even then densely populated empire of China, began to go westward over the great plateau of Central Asia, pasturing their immense flocks and herds on the rich loam in the valleys of these Asiatic Niles—the Obi, the Yenesei and the Irtush—on to the shores of the Caspian Sea, into Southern Russia. Towards the end of the fourth century the Huns moved westward right into Hungary, where, under Attila, they tyrannised the world.

Ten centuries later another mighty wave gathered near where now the Trans-Siberian joins the Chinese Eastern Railway, under the leadership of Jenghiz Khan, and followed on the path of the Huns. Like these, their track was marked by all the horrors of barbarian conquest, on to the capture of the city of Moscow and the complete subjugation of Russia, and the defeat of the best armies which Poland and Hun-

gary could bring against them. Their terrible journey sunsetwards, leaving the snow blood-stained in their track, makes one of the most lurid pages in history, and their treatment of the Russians one of the most frightful punishments that ever befel a conquered people. For over two hundred years the Mongols remained levying a heavy capitation tax upon the Russians, and it was not until the fourteenth century that they began to pull themselves together with the object of shaking off the insupportable yoke. Under the leadership of Demetri they were encouraged by gaining a victory over the forces of their oppressors, who in consequence collected an immense army, and in 1380, under Mamai Khan, marched towards Moscow to stamp his heel upon this incipient rebellion. By this time, however, the Russians had had time to prepare for a mighty effort; and Demetri now had an army of 150,000 men, with whom he met the Tartars on a great level plain, traversed by the river Don. This battle is one of the most remarkable in history, both on account of the large number engaged on each side, the importance of the issue depending upon it, and the terrible slaughter, which is said to have been 200,000 men. It was not a decisive battle, however. Although the invaders had rather the worst of it, it was not successful in stopping their advance. For a couple of years later we find the khan established at Moscow, Demetri paying homage to him, and undertaking to pay a heavy tribute. It was not until exactly a hundred years later that Ivan III. began the movement that, turning the Tartars back, drove them finally out of Russia. Pursuing altogether different tactics from Demetri, he did not risk a great battle, but wore them down, and, harassing them through the winter, brought that great ally of Russia to the help of his arms.

In 1480 the great west-flowing tide had ceased for ever. After a pause of a century that movement eastward began slowly and gradually, which to-day has now reached full

flood. Following close on the footsteps of the retreating Tartars a family named Strogonof had gone out to Perm, and with the approval of the government had formed a colony there, developing the industries of the district and doing a large trade in furs. Other settlements were established in the region, which in time were frequently raided by the dwellers on the Asiatic side of the Ural Mountains. In 1579 the Strogonofs applied to the Czar and obtained from Ivan IV. permission to send an expedition for the chastisement of these marauders. There was at that time an officer of Cossacks at Perm, one Yermak Timofeyevitch, a man of iron constitution and indomitable courage, weather-beaten in temperament by the hardships of wild and primitive life. To him they entrusted the command, and he collected around him a force of brave and hardy Cossacks, prepared to do anything and to go anywhere. The expedition of these adventurers under Yermak, originated as a measure of defence, was regarded otherwise by its commander. The Czar, hearing after he had started that he meant to make it a campaign of invasion, sent to have him recalled, but it was too late; the Russian conquest of Northern Asia had begun, and from the town of Siber, which Yermak captured, it was named Siberia.

In 1580 he defeated the Tartar prince Yepancha on the banks of the Tura and took the town of Chingi-Tura, which is the present city of Tiumen. Not content with this he pushed on to the Tobol, defeated Kuchum the Tartar chief and hoisted the Russian flag, which, wherever hoisted, is never hauled down, on the 26th of October 1581, over his capital. The entire country was virtually annexed to Russia and thrown open to Russian colonisation. Yermak sent his lieutenant, Koltso, an outlaw who had been sentenced to death, back to the Czar with presents of rich sables and a prayer to accept the new kingdom of Siberia, which he had conquered for him. The first step to Russianising this newly annexed territory was taken by

the State, and a band of thirty families from Soloychegodsa, sent out in May 1590, were the first of that great stream of state-aided emigrants that has since been pouring into the country eastward of the Urals. Three years afterwards a beginning was made to colonise it with exiles when some of the inhabitants of the town of Uglich, concerned in the murder of the Czarevich Dmitri, were deported together.

Looking back on the history of the acquisition of Siberia by Russia, it is astonishing to find with what little bloodshed it was accomplished. After this first expedition of Yermak's the advance went on step by step, until in mid-Siberia the Buriats made a stand, and there stopped Russian progress for thirty years. There was some bitter fighting in the north-east with the Koriaks, accompanied with much horrible cruelty and severity. Then there was the campaign of 1900, which led to the occupation of Manchuria, but how insignificant this fighting in comparison to that which has been required to conquer large areas in other continents! The occupation of most of the territory has been the result of persistent, dexterous and determined diplomacy, working ever in a clear and definite course, free from the wobbling uncertainty of changeful policy or ministers working on a system of "short shifts." A great portion of Asiatic Russia was almost voluntarily ceded, as, for instance, when the King of Georgia abdicated in favour of the Czar, and the absorption of the entire region of the Caucasus followed almost necessarily. The Kirgiz Tartars, in calling on the Czar to protect them against their Turkoman neighbours, invited him to absorb their country just as much as the Khan of Mongolia did in 1900, when he put himself under the suzerainty of the Czar and threw off that of the Emperor of China. Muraveief more than any other individual has been successful as a pacific conqueror, for to his diplomacy is the acquisition of the whole of the Amur and Assuri provinces due, which was accom-

plished when the Treaty of Pekin was signed by Count Ignatiev, on the 2nd of November 1860.

In contrast to the great Tartar treks westward, marked with the blood of fierce battles and ruthless massacres, the eastward trek of the Russians has been a peaceful one. Compare their treatment of the aborigines with the treatment of the natives of Africa or North America by their conquerors. In those cases where there was opposition such as with the Buriats, when the fighting was over they at once made friends, established cordial and friendly relations, and lived amicably together afterwards. This is a wonderful and almost unique quality as conquerors that the Russians possess, and goes far to the establishment of their power on a deep and secure foundation. It is doubtful if even now the majority of the inhabitants of Manchuria would not individually prefer Russian to native rule, as will possibly be the case with the Mongols in a few years' time.



Cossacks.

Where will the eastward movement stop and the Russian cry halt? Will history repeat itself, and a titanic battle, similar to that fought on the banks of the Don between Demetri and Mamai Khan, be fought on the banks of the Pei-ho or on the frontier of Korea, or, as some would expect, on the lower slopes of the Himalayas? Who can hazard a prophecy? Yet if we are to reason from the history of her progress, and judge from the past what may happen in the future, we have sound and leading principles to guide our forecasts. Russia's expansion has been along the line of least resistance into the vast territory of Siberia,

practically unoccupied. In the two cases of serious opposition she soon showed the former sole occupants that there was room enough for both, and improved their lot from what it was before. She has advanced along the same lines of latitude, and gone into countries with similar climatic conditions to those of Russia. Her primitive, strong, uneducated people are fit and able to grapple with the adverse forces of nature where they have plenty of room, and where time is no object, and there is no competition to hurry them. That Russia was to force an opening for herself, and secure an ice-free port on the shores of the Pacific was inevitable. Is it only to take breath for a greater and more sweeping movement? That is the interesting question. It may be, but I very diffidently think it is not so. I think Russia has now got all she will want for the next one or two centuries to come, and what is more important, that the guiding brains of the empire realise it. She has bitten off quite as much as she can chew for that time.

As regards India and China (in most respects they can be classed together), what would they yield to Russia if by a stroke of the pen they were to be made hers to-morrow? They are both of immense value for manufacturing countries to trade with, but what value to the countries who have the responsibility of governing and holding them? What chance would the Russian peasant have of making a living by agriculture against the native of China or India, and still less of being able to hold his own in any branch of business?

To my mind the scare about a Russian invasion of India is the most absurd thing in contemporary politics. It has recently had one particularly bad effect, inasmuch as it has diverted attention and energy away from where much more profitable results might have been attained, namely, in insisting that when the Russians occupied or practically annexed Manchuria, it should be completely opened to our

commerce. Instead of a completely open door, the two tiny "tradesmen's entrances," half doors, tortuous turnstiles, or whatever one likes to call them, have been opened by Mr Hay. The United States, by his persistent, quiet, yet strenuous diplomacy, has opened Manchuria just as much to the rest of the world. There Greek met Greek, the doggedness of the Russian diplomat was not going to tire out, put off, or side track the American. We had and still have the greatest share of commerce with the East; we might as well be Norway, Denmark, or Switzerland, as far as the opening of Manchuria is concerned.

India is not for Russia. I don't believe its invasion will ever be attempted, and the idea of that possible invasion has kept us too long maintaining an attitude of suspicion, antipathy and distrust towards a Power with which in many ways and many places we might beneficially co-operate. The idea of a triple alliance of England, France, and Russia opens up many possibilities. Eastward from where I write these lines in the Balkan Peninsula (where I find myself removed from the possibility of personally correcting the proof sheets of this book), I mean at Constantinople, the acquisitive ambition of Russia more probably centres. For Asia, Russia has sufficient occupation for a long time to come in developing, cultivating, reclaiming, and civilising that wide region through which with masterly foresight she has driven her great railway.

All the Russians of all the Russias for centuries to come may there find field and scope sufficient for all their energy in tilling into rich harvest and dotting with cities of humming industry that vast wilderness potential in productiveness, lying waiting for them, since erstwhile over its lonely tracts roamed the mammoth, bellowing his thunderous call beneath the Northern Stars.

APPENDIX

1 rouble . .	=	100 kopecks.
1 rouble . .	=	2s. 2d.
1 tael (Chinese)	=	1s. 9d.
1 verst . .	=	0.6628 mile.
1 desiatin .	=	2400 sazhens.
1 sazhen .	=	7 feet.
1 poud . .	=	36 lb.

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